



God and Necessity

A Defense
of
Classical Theism

STEPHEN E. PARRISH

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To Sharon

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Preface

This book has a long and complex origin. I began thinking about these matters in the early seventies. By the end of that decade, I had developed the basic thesis, that God exists and cannot fail to exist, which is defended here. Expanding on the thesis, and defending it against various criticisms took place in the eighties, when I was a graduate student in philosophy at Wayne State University. The major argument was used as the basis of my doctoral dissertation. Following graduation I began to rewrite the dissertation. The rewriting process took place at William Tyndale College where I am the Library Director and Assistant Professor in Philosophy, and lasted nearly four years. Among the many scholarly ancestors of the themes in the book are Alvin Plantinga, Gordon Clark, Cornelius Van Til, and Borden Parker Bowne.

Among those who deserve credit for whatever virtues the book has are the members of my dissertation committee, John Reed, Robert Yanal, R. Brad Angell and especially Bruce Russell. The majority of them strongly disagree with the thrust of my thesis: nonetheless, they were unfailingly fair and helpful at that stage of the work.

I am grateful for others who have critiqued various parts of the book; Gary Habermas, David King and Richard Ostella. Also, I would like to thank Marjorie Parrish and John Meyer for financial support. Among the numerous individuals who have helped in some way or another are: Glenn Dougans, Edythe Woods, Mary Warner, Lisa Penfold, Laura Hugger, Mark Gomez, Yekaterina Troitsky, Steven Thompson, Carrie Swift, Abdallah Jano, Johnni Parmentier, Walter Lockhart, Ray Dolinski, Nick Cirocco, Melanie Hopp, Flora Wayne, Terry LaDuke, Shannon Morgan, Katrina McGuire, Ron Hasselbring, Cindy Rose, Debra Holm, Donna Marcella, Kathryn Samson, Lynne Smelser, Mona Griffin, Beverly Liberty and Mary Sullivan. The last two named have been invaluable in finding errors. Any remaining errors are mine. Please note that, when quoting, I have changed the authors numbering systems to match my own.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Sharon and my daughters Sarah, Rebekah and Mary for putting up with the writing of this work.

Introduction

This book has two main tasks. First, a determination will be made as to what is meant by the concept of 'necessary', that is, what kind of necessity is attached to the being that we call necessary. Further, an examination will be made as to what kind of being, if any, could coherently be called necessary. It will be argued the only kind of non-abstract being to which necessity of the requisite sort can coherently be ascribed is a being whose properties are identical with those of the God of classical theism. Second, an argument which seeks to establish the existence of a necessary God, a God identical with the God of classical theism, will be elucidated and defended. This argument shall be named the *Transcendental argument*, and argues that the existence of the God of classical theism is a necessary presupposition for all justified belief.

Western philosophy has seen a dispute between naturalism and theism. This dispute is between those who hold the physical universe is self-existent and those who hold its existence depends upon a God who is transcendent to the universe. Most God concepts have not been of this nature. The ancient Greeks and Romans, for example, and other ancient pagans, believed in personal gods who existed within the space-time universe. The modern religion of Mormonism shares this belief. The classical theistic concept of God was not developed by the ancient Greeks; rather it was imported into philosophy from an alien source, the Hebrew scriptures. Willis Glover writes this about the Hebrew notion of God and the related doctrine of creation:

The biblical doctrine of God is unique; no religion other than those developed out of the biblical tradition contains anything like it. In the biblical doctrine God is in any ontological sense completely discontinuous with the world. The world, on the other hand, is completely dependent upon God; it continues to exist by his continuing will for it to exist. Its unity is in his will or purpose and not an intrinsic property.¹

It is no wonder that a great deal of time and effort has been spent questioning these concepts. For if God exists, he is the ultimate explanation of everything else.

Whether God exists or not is also the question of whether reality is fundamentally personal or impersonal, whether people are made in the image and likeness of God or whether they are end products of a process of time, matter and chance. The answer to what we and reality are like depends on whether God exists or not; on what is truly ultimate.

Theism and naturalism, because of their radically different concepts of what is ultimate, are at odds at almost every turn. Gordon Clark states, "The source of all contrasts between paganism and Christianity is the difference in their concepts of God. In any system the ultimate principle determines the form of the whole and shows its implications in the details for ethics, physics, and epistemology."²

Throughout the majority Western civilization's history, the answer that philosophers gave to the question of God's existence was a resounding yes. There were disagreements on many issues surrounding God, but most philosophers not only accepted that God existed, but could demonstrate his existence. This situation began to change in what was known as the Enlightenment era. During the later part of the seventeenth century and especially the eighteenth century, rejection of theistic arguments became popular. Bruce Reichenbach writes, "[T]he philosophical tandem team of Hume and Kant seemed to have successfully disposed of what at one time appeared to be canonic truth."³

Since the two basic alternatives in the West have been some form of theism or naturalism, the rejection of theism brought about a general acceptance of naturalism. There have been some pantheistic exceptions such as the Absolute Idealist philosophers of the nineteenth century. But naturalism in its various forms is the controlling philosophy for the majority of intellectuals at the present time. Philosophically, the revolt against God gained much of its impetus from the work of Hume and Kant, though others such as Marx, Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud had much to do with the revolt against God.⁴ Whatever the history, the contemporary consensus in non-theistic metaphysics, usually naturalism, is true. In spite of a partial revival of theism among philosophers, the truth of naturalism is almost taken for granted in most intellectual circles.

This book critiques this consensus. It will be argued that theism is rational and naturalism, along with other non-theistic theories, is not. It is to this task that we must now turn.

CHAPTER 1

GOD AND NECESSITIES

This chapter defines many of the terms which will be used throughout this book and contains explanations and defenses of my use of these terms. Those who do not wish to delve into the intricacies of the arguments presented here should skip to the main theme which begins in chapter two.

The conviction which underlies this book is the concept that necessity provides the key for determining the truth about the existence and nature of God. I propose by elucidating and using the concept of necessity, the various metaphysical theories that have been proposed, e.g., theism, naturalism, pantheism, and panentheism specifically; can then be judged. To do this some of the major concepts which will be discussed will be carefully defined. These concepts are expressed by the following terms: 'world', 'reality', 'universe', 'concrete and abstract entity', 'explanation', 'giving an account of', 'chance', 'world-view', 'theism', 'naturalism', 'pantheism', 'gods and God', and also 'necessity', 'possibility' and 'impossibility'. Other concepts will be defined as needed.

The first set of concepts are expressed by the terms 'world', 'reality' and 'universe'. The term '*world*' means reality as it is, or else one way that it could have been. Thus, the actual world and possible worlds that could have been real are worlds. One property of possible worlds is that of *maximality*, that is, for every possible world, every proposition that is capable of being true or false is true or false in each world.¹

When the word '*reality*' is used, what is meant is, everything that exists either concrete or abstract. Reality is thus synonymous with actual world. 'Is real' applies to individual objects or sets of objects.

'*Concrete entities*' are entities that are individual things; they can change, and have or could have causal powers. '*Abstract entities*' (if they exist) are universals rather than particulars, cannot change, and do not have causal powers. Universals, values and numbers are examples of abstract entities.² There is one problem here that I will mention without going into detail: God is usually defined as a concrete

being yet in many descriptions is immutable, or changeless. The point being that among his other attributes, God is a unique being, one that does not completely fit in any categories with other existents. For the sake of simplicity God will be defined as a concrete being, but with some characteristics different from other concrete beings.

The word '*universe*' will reference the interconnected material universe that we experience about us; all of the planets, stars, cosmic dust and various forms of energy that are collected in the same space-time manifold.³ If other universes actually exist, that is, different collections of material objects that are in other actually existing but separate space-time manifolds unconnected to the one which we are in, they are separate universes but would be in the same world, e.g., the actual world. Thus, strange though it may seem, the concept of '*universe*' is included in the concept of '*world*'. For a world by the definition being used here contains *everything* that exists, while a universe may only contain some of the things that exist.

Another term to be defined is '*explanation*'. For the purpose of this work, an explanation will be a cause or reason for something (entity, event, state of affairs, etc.) simply to exist, or to exist in a particular manner. Explanations are given by referring to principle(s) and/or entity(ies) which constitute the reason or cause. In explaining something, one says it exists in the manner it does because of some other principle(s) or entity(ies) that cause it to be in this certain manner. Although '*explanation*' is normally used to refer to some other, often more basic principle(s) and/or entity(ies), it may also sometimes just mean the answer to the question of why some situation(s) exists in the manner it does.⁴

There is a theory of the universe which I shall call the '*Brute Fact*' theory; that states there is no ultimate reason or explanation why the universe, as a whole, exists in the way that it does. One could still explain some things in terms of other principle(s) and/or entity(ies); e.g., a ball is moved because it was struck by a bat, or an apple falls because of the law of gravity. However, using the Brute Fact theory the fact there are laws of force and gravity has no explanation. There is, in the Brute Fact theory no ultimate explanation why things exist. The Brute Fact theorist, when pressed as to why there is a universe existing in the manner it does, would just say there is no '*explanation*'. This, of course, is not an '*explanation*' as the term is defined above, but it is a popular theory of why there is a universe which exists in the manner it does. To avoid any possible confusion I will restrict the term '*explanation*' to mean a reference to (logically if not temporarily) principle(s) and/or entity(ies). The absence of a cause or reason is thus not an '*explanation*', but rather '*giving an account*'. '*Giving an account*' is a broader term than '*explanation*'. '*Giving an account*' includes everything that can signify an '*explanation*' but also includes any possible objects or events which arise and exist in the manner they do for no reason at all.

To exist by '*chance*' will mean something exists in the way that it does for no cause or reason. This definition of '*chance*' is not the only one, or even the most common one. A more common definition is to define '*chance*' as something that

happens to some object accidentally. For example, water may be something that is essentially wet, but water can accidentally be raining in my backyard. The fact that some particular molecule of water is falling in my backyard is something that happens by chance, even though there may be a cause and/or explanation at every step in the process. This is a legitimate definition of the word chance, but not the one which will be used.

This book is partly about conflicting world-views. As Ronald Nash puts it, "A world-view is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality."⁵ In the above quotations, the authors use phrases like 'interpretive framework' and 'conceptual scheme', as two ways of saying the same thing. Other synonymous terms include 'conceptual framework' and 'noetic structure'. These terms all refer to the organization of our thought into definite frameworks whereby one believes, values and judges things. A theory in chemistry is a conceptual framework. The various facts of chemistry are arranged in certain patterns, with propositions about chemistry judged as true or false, probable or improbable, important or unimportant, and so on. There are noetic structures about all areas of thought; science, history, sports, etc.

A 'world-view' is a *maximal noetic structure* (or maximal conceptual framework, etc.). It is itself a noetic structure and includes other, smaller (involving fewer propositions) noetic structures. A person with a particular world-view will have included in it a certain smaller noetic structure about history. But a world-view may not be contained in another noetic structure. This is why it is called maximal.

It will be argued in the course of this book that ultimately all world-views are varieties of, or a combination of, three basic ones which are 'theism', 'pantheism' and 'naturalism'. To make things clearer 'theism', 'naturalism', 'pantheism' and the closely related term 'panentheism' will be defined. According to Peter Angeles 'theism' is,

Belief in one God (monotheism) transcending but in some way immanent in the universe. Other characteristics usually associated with this monotheistic Deity of theism; God is personal, the creator, the sustainer of existence, omnipotent, omnibenevolent, omniscient, supreme in power, reality and value, the source and sanction of all values, and accessible to human communication.⁶

For the rest of this work when the term '*theism*' is used, it will mean the monotheistic Deity that is described by Angeles. Thus, 'theism' will be considered synonymous with 'classical theism', the traditional theism of the West, and the traditional concept of God in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In these traditions God has been described as personal, omnipotent, omni-benevolent, etc. And though Angeles does not mention it, God has almost always been considered necessary in some sense. That is, classical theism, in the forms that most of its advocates have defended, has ascribed some form of necessity to God. There are other systems which deserve the name 'theism' because they have a personal God, but where he

is not the infinite transcendent creator of classical theism. Rather he is considered finite and/or dependent upon the universe. These views include finite theism and process theology; the later has become the main theistic rival to classical theism in philosophy and theology. My focus will be on classical theism, thus when 'theism' is mentioned it will mean 'classical theism'. When writing about other concepts of God I will use terms like 'process theism', a 'finite god' and so on.

In contrast to theism, '*naturalism*' holds that the physical universe is ultimate. Here is part of Angeles definition of '*naturalism*':

*The universe (nature) is the only reality. It is eternal, self-activating, self-existent, self-contained, self-dependent, self-operating, self-explanatory. The universe is not derived from nor dependent upon any supernatural or transcendent being or entities. Natural phenomena cannot be 'interfered' with, 'violated', 'suspended'. There is no supernatural realm.*⁷

It should be noted one can be a naturalist and believe in a god or gods. Any gods that existed would be material beings, or at least spatially and temporally in and dependent upon the material universe. An example of this is Mormonism, which maintains that personal gods exist, indeed, an infinite number of them, but that these gods are finite, material beings who exist within the universe.⁸

The last of the three great world-views is '*pantheism*', with its closely related position of '*panentheism*'. These positions are somewhat less clear-cut than the other two, because as will be shown, there are many different kinds of pantheism. Angeles defines pantheism this way, "*Pantheism . . . The belief that God is identical with the universe. All is God and God is all. The universe as a whole is God.*"⁹

Put this way, God and the universe are synonymous. In this case (pantheism) and in naturalism the universe is all that exists. Indeed, a certain type of pantheism is just naturalism with another name. But there are many different varieties, including versions that hold there is a spiritual reality which transforms itself into a material universe periodically and then reverts to spirit again; and those who say that the material universe is just an illusion, that the only reality is God, and we are just 'appearances'. Others would say we are just an 'aspect' of God, not truly part of God but only a part of his being. The major difference between these versions of pantheism and naturalism is that for the pantheist reality is fundamentally spiritual rather than physical. In this sense pantheism resembles theism.

There are important differences between theism and pantheism. One major disagreement between theists and pantheists is that theists believe that God created the world, while pantheists believe that the world is part of God. Another major point of disagreement is theists believe that God is personal, while for pantheists God is generally believed to be impersonal. Even those pantheists who believe God is in some sense personal, usually also believe there is an impersonal aspect to God. That is to say, in theism reality is ultimately personal, which means that all things have their final meaning, purpose and explanation in terms of God's mind and will.

Classical theists have typically held everything, every grain of sand, is created by God for a reason. With pantheism reality is usually ultimately impersonal. This entails, as in naturalism, that people are a product of impersonal forces. As Norman Geisler and William Watkins put it, "Those pantheists who grant any kind of reality to the universe at all agree that it was created *Ex Deo* (out of God), not *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), as theism maintains. There is only one 'Being' or Existent; everything else is an emanation or manifestation of it."¹⁰

Panentheism is a step closer to theism. As Angeles defines this term, "*Panentheism* . . . All things are imbued with God's being in the sense that all things are *in* God. God is more than all that there is. He is a consciousness and the highest unity possible."¹¹ Here reality is thought of being both ultimately personal and impersonal, spiritual and material. Both God and the world are equally ultimate, or else the universe is an eternal and necessary emanation from God, as Bahai thought.¹² Or the universe is considered to be God's body with God's conscious mind standing in much the same relation that a human mind stands in relation to a human body. One major difference between panentheism and theism is that in theism God is ultimate, and the universe is the result of his free creation, while in panentheism both God and the universe (considered here to be distinct from God for the purpose of analysis) are equally real and cannot exist apart from each other.

There are at least three major differences between naturalism and theism. First, in naturalism there is only one level of reality, the physical universe. In theism there are two levels, with God as the basic reality and the universe as a caused reality. Second, in naturalism reality is ultimately physical, that is, what most basically exists is matter or energy. In theism, spirit or mind is the basic reality, while material objects have only a secondary existence. Third, in naturalism reality is ultimately impersonal. If matter is ultimate, then mind can only be a result of certain combinations of matter. Reality would be basically impersonal, and personality would be a result of the interaction of impersonal forces. In theism on the other hand, reality is ultimately personal. God, in theism, is by definition a person and the cause of all else that exists. Therefore, impersonal things like atoms and rocks are the result of a the divine person's mind and will.¹³

Pantheism and panentheism are in some respects intermediate positions. In panentheism there are two aspects of reality, both ultimate. Here both God and the universe are equally basic, and cannot exist without each other.¹⁴ So it may be said there are again two levels of reality. But it is not the case, as it is in theism, that one is independent and the other causally dependent upon it. Again, in panentheism reality is ultimately both physical and spiritual, personal and impersonal. It combines both naturalism and theism. Pantheism on the other hand, has one level of reality, like naturalism, but this reality expresses itself in two different aspects, the world of appearance and the ultimate in itself. But all reality is made up of one substance, ultimately spiritual.¹⁵ There have been differences among pantheists regarding the third criterion. Many have held that the Absolute or ultimate spirit is impersonal, or 'beyond' personality; others have held that it is partially personal,

which brings them closer to theism.

Primarily, 'God' means the God of classical theism. Secondly, it may refer to whatever is the ultimate source of existence, values, the supreme authority and/or the supreme object of devotion. Roy Clouser argues what is a 'God' in any philosophical or religious system is that which exists without depending upon anything else, and upon which everything else depends.¹⁶ In the classical theistic system there is only one God, who is the source of both being and values. God is personal in the theistic system, and therefore being, value and personality all come from him. He is the final point of predication (the ultimate existent who is the reason for being of everything else) and the source of all values. According to classical theism, God is also omnipotent (can do everything logically possible), omniscient (knows all propositions) and omni-benevolent (all good). For the theist, God is therefore the ultimate being upon which all else depends.

All complete and coherent philosophical systems must have ultimates. There must be an ultimate being or beings, upon which everything that exists depends, or is made of. This ultimate being(s) must serve as the ultimate value and as the final source of authority in the system. In naturalism what is ultimate are physical things. Here the physical does not depend upon anything else, but everything else depends upon it. Other systems may have more than one 'god' or ultimate, e.g., a system may have both matter and abstract objects as ultimates. For any of these systems, 'monotheistic' or 'polytheistic', this being(s) is in effect a 'god', even if like matter, the existents which serve as one of the 'gods' for that system have few of the attributes the God of classical theism possesses. *When God is mentioned, it will be the God of classical theism. When speaking of the most fundamental entity(ies) in any system, the word 'ultimate' will be used.*

I stated earlier the key concept for deciding the issue at stake here is the concept of necessity, and also the related concepts of possibility and impossibility. There are many different meanings to the word 'necessity'. There will no attempt to examine them all here, although several different kinds will be examined in detail. The essence of what is meant by the concept of necessity is that which cannot be other than it is. It, the thing or situation or whatever, has to be the way that it is. The notion of necessity which I will emphasize the most is what Alvin Plantinga calls a *broadly logical necessity*. He writes:

In the first place, truths of logic-truths of propositional logic and first order quantification theory, let us say-are necessary in the sense in question. Such truths are logically necessary in the narrow sense . . . But the sense of necessity in question-call it 'broadly logical necessity'-is wider than this. Truths of set theory, arithmetic and mathematics generally are necessary in this sense, as are a host of homlier items such as:

No one is taller than himself.

Red is a color.

If a thing is red, then it is colored.

No numbers are human beings.

and No prime minister is a prime number.¹⁷

However besides these propositions that are self-evidently necessarily true, others who's truth is not so clear as:

Every person is conscious at one time or other.

Every human being has a body.

No one has a private language.

There never was a time when there was space but **no** material objects.

And,

There exists a being than which it is not possible that there be a greater.¹⁸

Having offered these possible examples of 'broadly logical necessity', Plantinga goes on to contrast it with causal or natural necessity, that is, what is necessary by the laws of the universe. He writes:

So the sense of necessity in question is wider than that captured in first order logic.

On the other hand, it is narrower than that of *causal* or *natural* necessity.

Voltaire once swam the Atlantic.

For example, is surely implausible. Indeed, there is a clear sense in which it is impossible.¹⁹

There is also what may be called metaphysical necessity. James Sennett defines this as, "A proposition is *metaphysically true* just in case it is true in all possible worlds. A proposition is metaphysically impossible just in case its negation is metaphysically true. A proposition is metaphysically necessary just in case it is metaphysically true or impossible."²⁰ Some of what Sennett has in mind are propositions which are often held to be necessary, like some "ethical or epistemic principles"²¹ but which do not seem to be logically absurd. For example, many think it necessarily true that murder is immoral. There seems to be no contradiction or logical absurdity in denying the truth of the proposition that murder is wrong. Sennett thinks that metaphysical necessity refers not only to these kinds of necessary propositions, but also to the above two types of logical and broadly logical necessity. However, for reasons which will become clear below, the term 'metaphysical necessity' cannot be used for those propositions that are true in all possible worlds. In this book, all propositions which are true in all possible worlds, whether truths of propositional logic, broadly logically necessary truths, or ethical truths, will be named logically necessary propositions.

Any proposition that is false in all possible worlds is 'logically impossible' and

any proposition that is true in some worlds and not in others is 'logically contingent'. Taken literally, 'logically necessary' refers to propositions whose denials entail contradictions. 'Logically impossible' propositions are those which themselves entail contradictions and 'logically contingent' propositions are ones in which neither they nor their denials entail contradictions. Sennett writes, "a proposition is logically true just in case its negation is logically impossible."²² With this in mind, let me state for the purpose of this work, if the proposition in mind is being formulated in first-order logic and there is a reason to distinguish it, then it will be named a "formulated logically necessary proposition". Propositions of the form $P \cdot Q \rightarrow P$ are thus formulated logically true propositions. They are true in all possible worlds and are in first order logic. The same will hold true for the impossible and contingent propositions that are formulated in first-order logic.

Besides this is the concept of broadly logically necessary. Included in this, for example, are propositions of mathematics. If $2 + 2 = 4$ is said to be a necessary truth, then what is meant is this proposition is true in all possible worlds; there are no worlds where $2 + 2 = 4$ is a false proposition. Logical impossibility is, of course, the exact opposite; if $2 + 2 = 5$ is said to be logically impossible, then what is meant is that there are no possible worlds where $2 + 2 = 5$ is a true proposition. Thus, a broadly logically necessary, impossible, or contingent proposition, will be one which is either true, false, or contingent in all possible worlds, but not directly formulated in first-order logic. When I say "logical necessity," I will usually mean broadly logical necessity.

Propositions such as the ones Sennett mentions, those which are ethical propositions that are often held to be necessary but from whose denials no contradiction can be derived, will be termed 'secondary logically necessary propositions'. The reason for this terminology is that their necessity is dependent upon something outside of themselves. Along with secondary logical necessity there will be secondary logically impossible propositions and secondary logically contingent propositions, that is, propositions whose modal status is dependent upon something else.

Two more points should be made here. First, all necessary propositions ultimately rely on the law of contradiction and other laws, e.g., the law of identity and the laws of logical inference, such as Modus Ponens, etc. Even broadly and secondary necessary propositions are true in all possible worlds because, ultimately, given the truth of the fundamental laws of logic, their denials entail a contradiction. One may not be able to formulate the contradiction, but nonetheless, there is a contradiction entailed. For example, in the statement that no one is ever taller than themselves, the contradiction may be derived as follows. Relying on the laws of identity and contradiction, and presupposing that reality must be determinate,²³ one may argue that everything exists in a certain manner. If one could be taller than oneself, then one would have two specific heights e.g., the height that one had that one was taller than, and the height that one had that was less tall than the height one had that was taller than oneself. But then one would have two different heights in the same object, in which case it would be false that one existed in one particular manner.

If one could be taller than oneself, then one could exist in one manner, and yet not exist in the same manner, which violates both the laws of identity and contradiction.

Second, although up to now we have been considering only propositions, there is also the matter of necessary being. A necessary being is one that exists in all possible worlds. Of course, a proposition that refers to a necessary being can itself be necessary. For example, the proposition, '*F* exists in the actual world'. If *F* is a necessary being, the proposition is a necessary proposition.

Some believe that it is impossible for any kind of necessary being to exist. Others charge that by attributing necessity to God, one is 'defining God into existence'. For if God is defined as a being who necessarily exists, then it would be self-contradictory to deny God's existence. And this would clearly be begging the question. However, I do not think this is what is being done by defining God as necessary. By defining God as necessarily existent, what is being maintained is that *if* God exists he is necessarily existent. That is, nothing that did not necessarily exist would count as being God. For example, if one defines 'super duper bachelors' as bachelors who necessarily exist, one is not saying that there really are any. One is merely saying that if there are any super duper bachelors then they must necessarily exist. In this case, not only aren't there any super duper bachelors, there couldn't be any. In saying that God is a necessary being, what is being said is that if there exists any being which is God, then that being will necessarily exist. And if he doesn't exist, then it is logically impossible for him to do so.

Not all necessity deals with that which is true or false in all worlds. Causal, natural, or what will sometimes be called factual necessity, are states of affairs that are logically possible or contingent. It is necessarily true in this world that light travels at a speed of 300,000 kilometers per second. This is a natural, factual necessity about this world. On the other hand, it does not seem to be the case that light travels at this speed in all possible worlds; there seems to be nothing *logically* impossible in light traveling at a speed of 400,000 kilometers per second. The reason for this is there seems to be no *contradiction* generated by light traveling at 400,000 kilometers per second. If true, then the proposition that light travels at 300,000 kilometers per second is factually necessary but logically contingent; there are worlds where it is otherwise. Many other examples of this general principle could be given.

One must presuppose the basic rules of deduction to generate a contradiction. It may be difficult to justify some of these basic rules of deduction simply on the basis of the laws of identity and contradiction alone. Nonetheless, these rules of deduction seem self-evidently necessary. Further, just because some equation or concept entails a contradiction, does not mean that this can be proved by human beings. Recently it has been announced that Fermat's Last Theorem has been proven. The proof took more than two hundred pages and only a handful of mathematicians can understand it. Now, the proof depends ultimately upon the laws of identity and non-contradiction, but as one can see, the contradiction in denying Fermat's last equation is not easily brought out. And of course, there may be theorems that are much more difficult to prove than Fermat's Last Theorem.

Indeed, there are theorems that no finite being can ever prove. Therefore this distinction must be kept in mind; a contradiction in some concept is not the same thing as a human being's ability to 'see' or prove that the contradiction exists.

Following this, the system of logical possibility used throughout this book will be the S5 system. The question arises as to why S5 is being chosen rather than T or S4, which are also consistent logical systems. There are several reasons. One is intuitive. It seems obvious that, as Alvin Plantinga states:

(1.1) If a state of affairs S is possible, then it is necessarily possible; that is, possible with respect to every possible world.

But then it immediately follows that:

(1.2) Every possible world is possible with respect to every possible world.

It also follows that:

(1.3) Any state of affairs possible with respect to at least one possible world, is possible with respect to every possible world.²⁴

Some, such as Philip Quinn, have questioned this type of argument. Seeing that T, S4, B, etc. are equally complete and consistent modal systems, why should we prefer S5? Quinn argues that our acceptances of one system over the others comes down to intellectual insight. And he claims that we lack the necessary insight to really see the truth or falsity of such propositions as:

(1.4) Possibly, it is possible that $2 + 7 \neq 9$.

and

(1.5) Necessarily, it is necessary that $2 + 7 = 9$.

To use Geach's language, I claim for no human the ability to comprehend the truth of (1.4) or the falsity of (1.5). Instead, my claim is that our mental endowments are such that we lack the ability to comprehend by direct intellectual vision either the truth for (1.4) or the falsity of (1.5).²⁵

Contrary to Quinn, I think it is true if we think about the different modal systems in terms of possible worlds, then in fact our intuitions do point to the superiority of S5. As it is put by Michael Loux:

[O]ur choice of a modal system need not be dictated by our very shaky intuitions about the complex formulas of those systems. We can rather ask ourselves which picture best conforms to our notions of modal inference. . . . Do we think that what is metaphysically [logically] necessary or possible can vary across possible worlds? If we answer the question affirmatively, then we commit ourselves to the view that M, the Brouwer system, or S4 provides a complete systematization of legitimate inference

of the metaphysically modal variety; for in all these systems, what is necessary or possible varies as we move from one possible world to another. If, however we reject this sort of 'situationalism' with regard to metaphysical modality, if, that is, we hold that what is metaphysically possible or necessary does not vary as we move from one possible situation or state of affairs to another, then we join most other philosophers in thinking that it is S5 that provides us with the correct theory of inference bearing on metaphysical modality; for it is only an S5 modal structure, where accessibility is an equivalence relation, that allows us to construe every world as accessible to every other.²⁶

And this is what I mean by saying S5 meets our modal intuitions. It seems self-evident that there is nothing possible in the logical sense in one world that is logically impossible in another world. One can imagine a world in which Voltaire swims the Atlantic, but one cannot imagine a world where people are taller than themselves, where red is not a color, or where the prime minister is a prime number. It is not just a matter of imagination either if one thinks of worlds where, for example, people are taller than themselves; rather in such examples a contradiction would seem to be generated.

If necessity, impossibility and possibility are all ultimately based on the laws of non-contradiction and identity, then what is necessary is that which would generate a contradiction if it did not maintain that which is impossible is that which generates a contradiction; and that which is possible is that which does not generate a contradiction either by existing or not existing. Since the form of the contradictory is always the same, A and $\neg A$, then it is true for all possible worlds. There are worlds where George Bush was not president and worlds where he was, but there are no worlds where he is and is not president, no matter how much those worlds differ from one another in other respects. Because of this, there are no worlds where something is logically necessary but only logically contingent in other worlds. This is best expressed in the S5 system.

Another way in which the superiority of S5 might be understood is in the concept of accessibility. G.E. Hughes and M.J. Cresswell state this point as clearly as any, so perhaps the following long quotation from them can be forgiven.

We can conceive of various worlds which would differ in certain ways from the actual one (a world without telephones, for example). But our ability to do this is at least partly governed by the kind of world we actually live in: the constitution of the human mind and the human body, the languages which exist or do not exist, and many other things, set limits to our powers of conceiving. We could then say that a world $W2$, is accessible to a world $W1$, if $W2$ is conceivable to someone living in $W1$; and this will make accessibility a relation between worlds, as we want it to be. Now if we were for find ourselves in one of the worlds of which we can conceive, then in that world our powers of conceiving might remain just as they were, or they might not-they might become enhanced or restricted in all sorts of ways; we might or might not even be able to conceive of the world in which we formerly lived. So the worlds which are accessible to $W2$ need not be the same as those which are accessible to $W1$. Suppose now that someone living in $W1$ is asked whether a certain proposition, p , is possible.

... He will regard this as the question whether in some conceivable world ... p would be true; but if there are worlds which are not conceivable to anyone living in $W1$, then he will not (because he cannot) take these into account ... this is one way in which we can interpret the notions of possibility and necessity, and it seems to be reflected in T .

It is not, however, the only way. In a stronger sense of 'conceive', one could not conceive ... of a world of a certain kind unless one had a complete insight into what it would be like to live in such a world-and that would include knowing what powers of conceiving someone who lived in that world would have. If we were to define accessibility in terms of conceivability in *this* sense, accessibility as a transitive relation we have $S4$, not T ...

$S5$, as we have already mentioned, reflects, on the other hand, an 'absolute' sense of the word 'conceivable'-a sense in which to say that a state of affairs is conceivable is to say something about *it*, without reference to the powers of conceiving which may or may not exist in any other state of affairs.²⁷

This being the case, $S5$ seems to be the best system for discussing logical necessity. This is the one system which is directed at the worlds themselves, rather than at what one can conceive. $S5$ seems clearly superior for what I have termed logical necessity, impossibility and possibility which includes broadly and secondary necessity and impossibility and possibility, for it makes these concepts matter which are independent of any constraints on the agent's intellect, or upon the communication systems of this world or that.

Another advantage of $S5$ over rival systems is its simplicity. $S5$ reduces all iterated modal operations to six basic forms (p , $\neg p$, Lp , Mp , $\neg Lp$, $\neg Mp$). Whereas $S4$ involves 14 distance irreducible modalities, $S3$ involves 42, and an infinite number of irreducible modalities are in $S2$ and simpler systems including T .²⁸

There is another reason to accept $S5$. This is the fact that $S5$ seems to be entailed by the classical concept of God. Which is to say, if the God of classical theism exists, then as will be argued in chapter three, he exists in all worlds. Furthermore, he is omnipotent and omniscient in all worlds; in short, sovereign in all worlds. Thus, what exists in any world at all depends upon the will of God, and this in turn depends upon the nature of God. But since, as again will be argued below, God has certain properties essentially in all possible worlds, he will have the same basic nature in all worlds. This means that what is possible, impossible and necessary for God is the same in all worlds. Thus what is possible (or necessary or impossible) is the same in all worlds because God is necessarily the same and determinative of everything else. Further, if God is essentially omniscient, then he knows everything in all possible worlds. This being the case, then every world is accessible to him, which again entails $S5$, for, there is one mind to which all worlds are known. Therefore, for $S5$ to be false and some other system of logic to be true, the God of classical theism has to not exist.

However, not only does the existence of the God of classical theism entail the

truth of S5, it also makes some modifications in S5. The main reason for this is clear. For example, some worlds which would be possible if God did not exist are not possible if God does exist. First of all are, of course, all those worlds containing no God. Second are worlds which in themselves seem to be coherent, but which conflict with the will of God, such as worlds where evil is totally and finally triumphant in the universe. These worlds may be logically coherent when only the universe is considered, but they are not when the mind of God is taken into account.

With these reasons for the superiority of S5, I will leave the burden of proof on those who deny what is logically possible, necessary, or impossible in one world is such in all of them. J.L. Mackie, in the process of arguing against Plantinga's version of the ontological argument, which depends upon the truth of the S5 system, concedes, "It is true that S5, the modal logic in which all iterated modalities collapse into the final modal operator, seems to be the appropriate system for what we understand as *logical* possibility and necessity."²⁹

Although I believe S5 is the proper system of logical possibility, impossibility and necessity, I do not deny that there are proper senses to the terms 'possibility', 'impossibility' and 'necessity', which are not defined in terms of S5. That is, I do not deny there are proper ways to use these worlds that pertain only to one or several worlds rather than all. Plantinga's example about the impossibility of Voltaire swimming the Atlantic demonstrates this. It is not logically impossible, but it certainly seems physically, or factually impossible.

More is needed than just S5. Additionally, we need to (i) distinguish De Re from De Dicto necessity, (ii) distinguish a God upon which all existing things in a given world depend, and (iii) deal with definite descriptions (*the* necessary *x*, vs. *a* necessary *x*.) These questions are related, and so must be dealt with systematically.

First (i). In De Re necessity, there would be one God with necessary existence in all possible worlds. That is, it would be the *same* God in all worlds. With De Dicto necessity, on the other hand, there would be *a* God in all possible worlds, but not the same God. There would be God *A* in world *W*, God *B* in world *W'*, God *C* in world *W''*, etc. Of course, any one God would exist in many different worlds, just as we can exist in many. The crucial point is it would not be the same God in all the worlds, the way that it is in De Re necessity. Classical theists have traditionally held to certain concepts of God; he is omnipotent, omniscient, etc. There has been dispute about his necessity. Another position commonly held is that God is factually necessary, he does not exist in all possible worlds but in those in which he does exist, he is uncaused, eternal and indestructible. To illustrate what is meant, I will list the 5 possible positions regarding the God of classical theism. For the purpose of this discussion, everything in the concept of God is the same except for the kind of necessity ascribed to God.

(1.6) There is a God with De Re necessity; the *same* God exists in all possible worlds.

(1.7) There are Gods with De Dicto necessity; there is one God in every possible world, but there are different Gods in the different worlds. (Though each God will

exist in more than one world, none will exist in every world.)

(1.8) There are Gods with factual necessity. That is, there are either different Gods in different worlds, no more than one to a world, but also worlds in which there are no Gods; or else only one God exists, but there is at least one world where no God exists. In either case, there is a factually necessary God in the actual world.

(1.9) There are Gods with factual necessity in some possible worlds, but not in the actual world.

(1.10) There is no God in any possible world. The concept of God at hand (omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, etc.) is a logically impossible one.

This lists all of the conceivable situations that there could be with the classical concept of God. (1.6) and (1.7) rely on different types of logical necessity; in these theories there must be a God in *every* world. (1.8) and (1.9) deal with factual necessity; in these theories what is being considered is the God of classical theism who cannot come into or pass out of existence. If he exists in a world, then he cannot fail to exist in that world. For this position there is at least one world where no God of the classical variety exists at all. The question, according to this concept, is whether or not there is a God in the actual world. In (1.10), there are no worlds with Gods. Interestingly, I have found defenders of every position save (1.7). Unless I say otherwise, by logical necessity I will mean *De Re* necessity, which means it is the same being who exists in all possible worlds. The whole issue of logical vs. factual necessity will be addressed at length in chapters two and three.

For (ii), one may say this. This entire discussion has at its root the classical concept of theism. The concept holds, among other things, that God is both necessary in some sense, and that he is the creator of all other things. It is the coherence of this notion and the naturalistic and pantheistic rivals which will be addressed. To reiterate, I am dealing with the concept of a God who is both necessary and the creator of all other things. If there is a being who is the creator of all other things, then by definition there cannot be any 'independent' necessary being; that is, necessary beings who exist independently of the creator. However, there could conceivably be what will be called 'secondary necessary beings'. Let us define a 'secondary necessary being' as a being who exists in all possible worlds but is caused to be. A 'primary necessary being' is one who exists in all possible worlds but is uncaused. If there were any secondary necessary beings they would have to be caused to exist in all worlds by a primary necessary being.³⁰ This issue is related to the notion of secondary necessary propositions. I do not maintain that any such secondary beings exist, but rather that their existence is conceivable, even if impossible.

As for (iii), this issue will be deferred until chapter four. Arguments will be given that there cannot be more than one primary, concrete necessary being. The discussion up until then shall presuppose this. So, unless I say otherwise, when speaking of *a* or *the* primary necessary being, I will be speaking of the God of

classical theism.

However, there is still much to say about necessity. Besides the various necessities that have already been examined, there are others; specifically about analytic and related kinds. There is a good deal of controversy about necessity. Some hold that all necessity is analytic. Others think there are several kinds of necessity. For instance, Quentin Smith suggests that:

[T]here are four species of necessary truth, viz. (1) tautologies, (2) analytic truths, (3) synthetic *a priori* truths and (4) metaphysically necessary *a posteriori* truths. Synthetic *a priori* truths are exemplified by 'Nothing that is green all over at time *t* is red all over at time *t*' and metaphysically necessary *a posteriori* truths are exemplified by 'Water is H₂O'. [Earlier in his paper, Smith gives a man is a man as an example of a tautologous necessity, and an unmarried man is a bachelor as an example of an analytic necessity.]³¹

It is because of the above that I do not define propositions that are true in all possible worlds as being metaphysically necessary. This term is reserved for such truths as 'necessarily, all water is H₂O'. I will accept Smith's scheme of the fourfold distinctions, but make significant modifications to it. Working from this framework, what kind of necessity is the God of classical theism? Obviously tautologies can be ruled out; a necessary truth of the form 'God is God' will not establish his existence in all possible worlds. Neither is (4), metaphysically necessary *a posteriori* truths a likely candidate. For these are of the form that water is H₂O, that is, anything that is not H₂O is not water. One might say anything that did not exist in all possible worlds would not be the God of classical theism, but merely pointing this out does not show how a being would exist in all worlds. Metaphysically necessary *a posteriori* truths are in fact truths of identity, or of essential properties.³²

Of course, tautologies and analytic necessities are or can be necessities of identity too. When dealing with individuals, metaphysical necessity deals with what properties the individual in question has essentially. What metaphysical necessity is regarding kinds is that for some kind *K*, what *K* is necessarily is some substance *S*: that is, that what *K* really is *S* (e.g. water), but one could be quite familiar with *K* and never know that it was composed of *S*. Water is necessarily H₂O. Something that looked, felt, tasted etc. like water but had the formula XYZ³³ would not be water. One could know much about water without knowing that it is composed of H₂O. Water has its own set of properties while the molecules of which it is composed have theirs. All this has important implications, but it is safe to say that God's existence in all possible worlds is not explained by metaphysical necessity *a posteriori*. Just the fact that necessarily, water is H₂O does not mean there is water in all worlds, so the fact that necessarily, God is omniscient does not mean that he exists in all possible worlds. It is true that if a person is not omnipotent, omniscient, etc, then that person cannot be God, but again, this does not establish why this person exists as God in every possible world.

The other two possibilities are analytic necessity and synthetic a priori necessity. For a primary necessary being, it seems that analytic necessity is needed. It has often been believed there were no beings that had existence analytic to their nature. Further, it has long been a sort of dogma among many analytic philosophers that all necessary propositions are analytic; thus it was denied that there were any synthetic necessities. Putting all this together, one concludes that there can be no beings with necessary existence. Others have agreed that there are no analytically necessary beings, but that there can be being(s) with synthetic necessity. In stating that God exists of analytic necessity we therefore need to clarify several points. Specifically, the nature of analytic and synthetic necessities and the difference between the two.

Traditionally, the essence of analytic necessity is that the necessity is contained in the meaning of the term. Thus, it is part of the meaning of parent that he or she necessarily have children. Unfortunately, things are not always this clear. For example, is it part of the *meaning* of cube that it is an object that has 12 edges? There is perhaps some ambiguity in the term 'meaning'. By meaning one sometimes means definition. In this case 'cube' could mean a regular solid with 6 equal sides. If this is what is meant by meaning, then 'having 12 edges' is not part of the meaning of cube. There is another understanding of the term 'meaning'. This other understanding is that 'meaning' is everything which is essentially part of the object in question. In this sense, 'having 12 edges' is part of the meaning of 'cube' because all cubes will necessarily have 12 edges. Being colored red is not, because cubes can be some other color.

However, this second definition of meaning is not quite as clear as it may seem. It is also true that it is necessarily entailed by the nature of being a cube that the cube not be colored both red and green at the same time. But this is an example which is usually considered to be a synthetic necessity. Furthermore, the above 'cube' was defined as a 'solid object with six equal square faces'. But why couldn't it also be defined equally as well as a 'regular solid with 8 vortices' or a 'solid object with 12 equal edges all placed at 90 degrees from each other'? If there is no other solid object than a cube that can be so described, why couldn't this be *the* definition? Or to put it another way, there may be no one right definition of many different things.³⁴ And this seems wrong, for analytic necessity is supposed to give the essence of a thing; and how can one thing have two or more different essences? Thus at least two problems are apparent, first, how analytic necessity is defined, and second, the distinction between analytic and synthetic necessities.

There is a further problem, that of entailment. There are properties which are necessarily part of the nature of some object, but would not ordinarily be part of its definition, or considered part of its meaning. For example, take a cube. It is necessarily entailed by the nature of being a cube that the two points on it that are diagonally across from each other are X times as distant from each other as two points that are next to each other. This is necessarily entailed, but no one would include it as part of the definition of the cube, and it is hard to say that it is part of its meaning. Is it analytic? Analytic philosophers have often said that analytic truths are necessary but in reality only reflect our determination to use words in a

certain way. This is the great battle cry of conventionalism. We will not call something an *X* unless it has properties *Y* and *Z*. Thus, from this point of view, analytic truths are in *some* sense arbitrary, for they just reflect our use of language, and do not tell us about necessity in reality itself. But this arbitrariness still results in a De Dicto necessity.

Let us briefly examine these three different problems. The position being defended here is modal realism.³⁵ Contrary to those who would defend the traditional understanding of analytic necessity, not all necessary truths are arbitrary, nor does it seem to be true that they do not 'tell one' anything about reality. First, there is a large difference between different necessary statements. As Brand Blanshard argues, "We may define a sergeant as a non-commissioned officer with three stripes, and then the statement 'a sergeant wears three stripes on his arm' will be an analytic statement."³⁶ But this kind of analytic statement is still quite different from the analytic statement that says 'red is a color'. For sergeant could quite easily have two or four stripes, or pink and purple ribbons, and still be a sergeant. All one would have to do to obtain this would be to change the way the term sergeant is designated. One cannot do the same with red. Red is a color no matter how one designates it. Thus, the sergeant example is of De Dicto necessity while the color example is of De Re necessity.

Second, it seems that analytic truths do tell us something about reality. As Arthur Pap argues, "But surely the a priori knowledge that 'x is a cube' entails 'x has 12 edges' warrants the deduction that all the cubical pieces of sugar in that sugar bowl have 12 edges!"³⁷ He writes:

Of course, no logical empiricist would deny that we have a priori knowledge of the cited proposition about the contents of the sugar bowl. But what then, is he denying when he avers that this is not knowledge "about reality"? Anything more than that the proposition which is known a priori is contingent? But is it not trivial to insist that whatever is deducible from an a priori is itself an a priori truth?³⁸

Or what about the fact that heat is necessarily the motion of molecules? This is a necessary truth about reality, as Saul Kripke argues.³⁹ Not only that, it is a necessary truth that we are dependent upon empirical investigation to obtain. Further, one could make the argument that 'being molecules in motion' is analytic to the notion of heat, if one has the theory that all necessary truth is analytic. Yet one may know what heat is, even if one has never heard of molecules. One can know what heat is essentially, e.g., a thing that produces a feeling of a certain kind, or registers in a certain way on a thermometer, without knowing some analytic truths about heat. If heat is essentially 'molecules in motion' it is taken as being an analytic statement. But this contradicts what analytic truths were supposed to be; that is, an explication of the meaning of the term in question. That heat is molecules in motion should be considered a metaphysical necessity rather than an analytic one. It is a question of the identity of heat, rather than of the meaning.

The point of all this is there are differences in necessary statements. Not all

necessary statements are reducible to analytic truths. Analytic is taken to just mean knowing something *Y* about an object *X* where *Y* is really part of the definition of *X*. If one is determined, one could stipulate that all necessary truths are analytic, as Alan Sidelle does,⁴⁰ but then there would be different kinds of analytic necessities. Just calling necessary truths analytic does not really obliterate the distinctions. What is important is not the terminology but the concepts. There are clear differences between different kinds of necessity. Some of these necessities really refer to differences in reality, apart from what one is determined to call something. If something is a regular solid with 6 square equal sides it will also necessarily be a regular solid with 8 vortices, whether one has a determination to call it a cube or not, or whether one knows that it also has 8 vortices or not. There is necessity in external reality, and not just in the determination to put a thing in a certain class if and only if it has a certain property.

Because the definition of necessary statements is controversial and somewhat obscure, I will offer my own definitions. What will be meant by tautology will be when two terms really mean the same thing. So, the way that the term is being defined here, bachelor = unmarried man is a tautology and not an analytic truth as Smith states.

Regarding analytic necessities, the essence is that the necessary property is *contained* in the term. Thus, *being extended* is analytic to the term *material body*, because by definition, material bodies are extended. On the other hand, using Kant's famous example of a synthetic necessity, $5 + 7 = 12$, one can see that this equation is not contained in the number 12. The concept of addition is not contained in the number 12, and therefore is not analytic to it, but it is analytic to the equation of $5 + 7$. It is true that in some sense addition is contained in 12, because 12 is the collection of 12 things put together, which is like adding them. Still, 12 or *twelveness*, does not have as part of its concept the formal notion of addition; rather one just has the concept of 12 things as a group, not the adding of various separate things to make the group. That is twelveness, not 12 different things added together. *At this level*, there is no mention of the concept of addition. After all, $20 - 8 = 12$ too, and yet it certainly seems the concept of 12 does not contain the concept of subtraction. Being a number is analytic to 12; so is being composed of several things. But neither 5, 7 nor addition are, for they are other concepts, external to the concept of 12. So that which is analytic is that which is *contained in the concept of the entity which is analytic*.

As was stated above, there are at least two things that can be meant by this. One definition is that which is analytic is analytic to the *definition* of the term. This is the definition of analytic necessity which is often used, but has the fault that one entity can have two or more equally good definitions. For example, a cube could be defined as 'a regular solid of 6 square equal sides' or as 'a regular solid with 8 vortices'. Both are definitions, but both contain terms that the other does not. Although they are describing the same object, one would have what is analytically necessary to them different. The other definition is that which is analytic is analytic to the essential concept. It is this last definition which shall be adopted here.

Therefore, for the purpose of this work, the following definition will be used. Analytic necessities are necessities that are contained in the essential concept of the object in question, or are explications of those *positive essential* necessities contained in the concept; without reference to the concepts of external things. That is, they are necessities that are contained in the meaning of the object by itself, that concept that describes what the object essentially is, and how it is different from everything else. For example, take a sphere. A sphere may be defined as 'a body which has one surface all points of which are equidistant from one point inside the sphere which is called the center'. Thus, that a sphere has one surface is analytic to the concept of it. That a sphere is not an object with three sides, although a necessary truth, is not analytic, as having three sides is a concept that is external to the sphere, e.g., is not contained in the positive essential concept of a sphere.

Another problem to be considered is the sphere's property of being smooth. A sphere will be smooth, and necessarily so. But is this an analytic necessity or some other kind of necessity? At some point the boundary between the different kinds of necessity becomes ambiguous. The answer given here will be that necessities, like that of the smoothness of the sphere, will be considered to be analytic because they are explications of essential properties. Being smooth is analytic to having a surface with all points on the surface equidistant from the center, and having all points on the surface equidistant from the center is analytic to being a sphere. Thus, 'being smooth' is a second order analytic necessity to 'being a sphere'. A 'first order analytic necessity' is therefore one that is in the very definition of the thing at hand. A 'second order analytic necessity' is an analytic necessity that is not part of the definition, but an entailment of the definition that refers to some positive property of the thing at hand. Of course, as previously mentioned, there can be different equally valid definitions of a thing. What constitutes a first or second order analytic necessity will differ with the definition, and thus is a relative concept; relative to the definition being used.

There is a difference between entailment and explication. That something that is colored red is not at the same time colored green is entailed by the notion of a 'red object'. This is not an analytic truth, for the concept of greenness is not contained or referred to in the positive concept of redness. Just considering redness will tell one nothing of greenness. But being colored is an explication of being a red object, for redness is essentially a color, and so this truth is analytic. This is as definite as a definition can be. Or to use the previously stated example of the cube, having 12 edges would be analytic to the concept of the cube, even though as Blanshard points out,⁴¹ one can understand what it is to be a cube without knowing that a cube necessarily has 12 edges, because having 12 edges is analytic to what it is to be a cube, even if one does not understand this. One understands that a cube has 12 edges, *by only considering the cube, and no other being*. If one had to consider some other being, then it would be synthetic and not analytic. In the example given above, it would be analytic to the concept of cube that two points that are diagonal to each other are necessarily *X* amount of distance greater than two points that are next to each other. In this context, the concept of edges is contained in the concept

of cube. Also, negative necessities are synthetic, e.g., that Bill Clinton is not a polar ice cap is synthetic.

There may be some irreducible ambiguity between analytic and other notions of necessity. Further, since I am stipulating here, none need agree with me on the definitions that I give. Nevertheless, I argue that there are intelligible distinctions between the different kinds of necessity, and I believe the definition I give makes the most useful and natural distinction.

It should also be noted, as stated above, there is a distinction between different analytic necessities. There are *De Dicto* analytic necessities, as in the fact that a sergeant has three stripes, and *De Re* analytic necessities, such as if something is a cube, it will be a regular solid with 6 square equal sides, and if the object has this, it will also have 8 vortices. The first necessity is clearly dependent upon our determination to call something a sergeant only under certain circumstances, or is dependent upon the laws of nature which are contingent; the second lies within the nature of the object itself.

But what about the alternative, synthetic necessity? Brand Blanshard makes this point in arguing that there are synthetic *a priori* necessities.

The positivist holds that what is asserted in any *a priori* proposition is *contained* in the meaning of its terms. This, on the face of it, is a paradox. 'What is red all over is not green all over'; is *not being green* part of what one means by 'red'? If so, the meaning of red will also include not being the south pole, the Fifth Symphony, or Greek civilization.⁴²

It seems what is meant by synthetic *a priori* necessities are those necessary truths that are not contained in the meaning of the entity being discussed, *nor are explications of the concepts contained in the meaning*. That 7 is a number is part of the meaning of 7, that 7 plus 5 equals 12 is not part of the meaning of the numbers involved. We have seen that nothing can be colored two different colors in the same way at the same time. This is a synthetic *a priori*, because it is not part of the meaning of a physical object, say a sphere, that is not colored both red and green at the same time. What does this tell us? In essence, that nothing can have contradictory properties. When what is meant by 'being colored' is clearly defined, it then becomes obvious that a thing can only have one color at one place and time. Again, in the case of spheres, it would be a synthetic *a priori* necessity that spheres do not have 3 edges. This may not tell one what was contained in the meaning of the term, as that all bodies are necessarily extended, or that 7 is a number is contained in the meaning of the concept. But it does tell one that when the analysis is extended beyond just the meanings, necessary truths are still discovered. Similarly, the difference between metaphysical and analytic necessity is fairly obvious. One could understand perfectly the concept of water; it is wet, liquid, etc., and not be able to deduce that it is necessarily H₂O. On the other hand, it seems to be analytic to the concept of water that it, under circumstances when it is liquid, flows, for that is part of what it means to be liquid.

It seems that God's necessity is not synthetic a priori. For the synthetic a priori pertains to necessities that are not part of the essential meaning of the term, they can be seen only when extended to relations with other things. But God, being unique and uncaused by definition, cannot be dependent upon other beings for his existence. His existence, if he exists necessarily, is part of his nature. If so, then God's existence in every world is part of his definition, and thus analytic. Not only that, but this is an ontological or De Re, and not a mere De Dicto analytic necessity. This general concept is valid, however, only if one defines God in this manner, as the GPB, a primary concrete necessary being. Any secondary necessary beings would be synthetic a priori, for they would owe their necessity to another. Similarly, a God that was only factually necessary would not have existence analytic to his definition. For there is at least one world where this being, by definition, does not exist, and so, even though by definition uncaused and indestructible, this being would not have existence as part of his nature.

In conclusion, there are several kinds of necessary truth. *For a proposition to be a logically necessary proposition, it must be true in all possible worlds. If the proposition is in first order logic, then it is a formulated logically necessary proposition. A being that exists in all possible worlds is itself logically necessary. To be causally or factually necessary, some proposition or being must be true because of the laws of nature in some worlds, but not in all. A tautology is merely a restatement of what has already been given. Analytic necessities are those that are essential positive properties that are entailed by the nature of the thing at hand, without consideration of concepts extrinsic to the thing at hand. Synthetic necessities are those wherein the concept is considered with other concept(s) extrinsic to the thing at hand. Metaphysical necessities are necessities of the identity and essential properties of kinds and individuals. Of analytic necessities, there are first and second order. First order analytic necessities are those that are contained in some legitimate definition of a thing, while second order analytic necessities are entailments of the definition, strictly regarding the defined object itself. Of course, analytic necessities that are secondary in one legitimate definition may be first order in some other legitimate definition. De Dicto analytic necessities are those that are such simply because of someone's determination not to classify a thing as a member of some kind unless it has certain properties. A De Re analytic necessity has its necessity in the nature of the object itself, apart from anyone's determination to classify it as anything. By no means is this everything that can be said about these kinds of necessities. And by no means are the above the only legitimate concepts of necessity.*⁴³

CHAPTER 2

GOD AND FACTUAL NECESSITY

In the previous chapter the concept of necessity, especially in its relationship to God, was extensively discussed. The concept of 'necessary God' which was used was that of a God who existed in all possible worlds. A God who exemplifies these attributes is known as a logically necessary God. Another concept of God's necessity is a being who does not exist in all possible worlds, but in those worlds where he does exist is uncreated, beginningless and indestructible. This is known as factual necessity.¹ A logically necessary God also has these attributes in addition to the characteristic that he cannot fail to exist in any world.

According to Ronald Nash the meaning of the two concepts of necessity can be described thusly:

If God's necessity is understood as logical necessity, the proposition 'God exists' is logically true. A logically necessary being is one that exists in every possible world. . . . A being who is necessary in the factual sense is one about whom three claims can be made. (2.1) The being is eternal, that is, it had no beginning and its existence will never end. (2.2) The being is self-caused, which is to say that it does not depend upon anything else for its existence. . . . (2.3) Everything else that exists depends upon the necessary being for its existence. Here is the key difference between the notions of logical and factual necessity; a factually necessary being does not exist in all possible worlds. In the sense of factual necessity, the proposition 'God does not exist' is not logically false. A factually necessary being is, in a sense, accidental.²

I believe the exposition Nash made is correct but needs clarification. Point (2.2) has importance to the discussion at hand. Let me begin by showing that there are only a limited number of options as to how or why a being can exist. A being can exist for three reasons: (A) It can have the reason for its existence within itself, (B) It can have the reason for its existence in another being or beings, or (C) It can exist for no reason at all. With regard to reason (A), the distinction between having a reason for its own existence and being the cause of its own existence must be made. In the second concept, reason (B), being caused, is included in the first

concept, having a reason, but is not identical with it. Causation involves the actualization of some potentiality. It means that some object is made to exist in some manner, which otherwise would not exist, by other being or beings. Having a reason for something is broader; it is a condition for something to be in a particular manner. Not being evenly divisible by any numbers other than one or itself is a reason for a number being prime. But it would not do to say, except in a metaphorical sense, it is a cause of that number being prime. Not being divisible by any number other than one or itself is not a cause of that number being prime. Being indivisible by any number than one or itself is not a being that actualizes the existence of some other being; the primeness of that number is not a being to be actualized.

The first question which must be asked is: Is it possible for a being to be self-caused? The answer is no. The second question to be asked is: Can a being exist for a reason intrinsic to itself? The answer is yes. Let us look at self-causation, the term Nash uses above. I believe he means by this that the being exists by a reason intrinsic to itself. This is because the notion of a self-caused being is incoherent. For a being to be the cause of itself, it would have to simultaneously exist and not exist. As Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan put it:

(2.4) A self-caused being is one that *does not have existence*, for if it had existence, it would not need a cause to give it the existence it already has.

(2.5) But a self-caused being is one that *has existence*, since it must exist in order to cause existence (nothing cannot cause something).

(2.6) But to have and not have existence simultaneously is impossible.

(2.7) Therefore, self-caused beings are impossible.³

While the notion of a self-caused being is contradictory, the notion of an uncaused being is not.⁴ If one uses the concept of uncaused rather than self-caused one can avoid absurdities like the example of Baron Munchausen pulling himself up by his own pigtailed which Schopenhauer brought up.

A distinction should be made between the uncaused being that has a reason for its existence, and the uncaused being that does not. This latter kind of being would exist for absolutely no reason at all, either intrinsic or extrinsic. The question of the coherence of this kind of being has also been raised.⁵ I believe it is impossible for such a being to exist, but not for the reasons which are usually given. That is, I think the reasons for its impossibility are external rather than internal. This point will be discussed in chapters four and ten.

Finally, we come to point (2.3). Why does Nash use this as a criterion? Because this would differentiate God from any other necessary beings that might be alleged to exist. Part of the definition of God is that of a being upon whom all other beings exist. Of course this can be looked at as being question-begging. Why should we

assume a priori that there cannot be other beings who exist but are not dependent upon God for their existence? There can be a number of responses to this. First, it may be stated that if there are any beings which exist but do not depend upon God for their existence, then God does not exist. That is, if such beings can or do exist, then by definition theism is false. Second, if a being exists who has the properties of the God of classical theism, then in any world in which he exists all beings will be dependent upon him for their existence. This can be argued in terms of either logical or factual necessity. For if the proponent of the logically necessary God believes that his God exists in all worlds, there are no possible objects that are beyond his reach. The believer in factual necessity on the other hand, may hold that it is incoherent for any finite beings to exist uncaused. If one does hold to this, then it is also true that all possible beings are dependent upon God. In this case the only world where God does not exist is the empty world, where nothing at all exists.

It is for these reasons that I speak of 'the' logically necessary being or 'the' factually necessary being. Over the course of the next several chapters it will be argued that the only coherent concept of a primary, concrete necessary being is that of the God of classical theism. And that only one description of the God of classical theism can exist. Therefore, there can be only one primary concrete necessary being.

Another point which requires clarification is the relationship between 'factual' and 'actual' necessity. 'Factual' could mean (a) exists in the actual world or, (b) exists in some possible worlds. For the purposes of this book I will be utilizing definition (b), exists in some possible worlds. A factually necessary being is one that can exist in some possible worlds, but not necessarily the actual one. Of course proponents of the factually necessary being believe in and argue for a factually necessary being in the actual world. One could be a determined atheist and still allow that there are possible worlds where the factually necessary being does exist. The atheist would just have to believe that this being does not exist in the actual world.

In this book the term 'logically' necessary being will mean a being who exists in every possible world and therefore has De Re necessity. The question of De Re versus De Dicto necessity will not be addressed here. As in the case of the uniqueness of the necessary being, it will be assumed that the only coherent concept of the logically necessary being is the one with De Re necessity. The argument for this will be given in chapter four. For the sake of this discussion it will be assumed that any primary, concrete necessary beings are identical with God.

To facilitate this discussion 'logically necessary God' will be abbreviated LNG and 'factually necessary God' will be FNG. It can be assumed from the above discussion that the LNG would have the same properties as the FNG. In addition he would have the property of existing in all worlds along with any other characteristics which accompany this trait. Other properties like omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness would be possessed by both the LNG and FNG. Both are eternal, independent and the cause of everything else that exists. Both are necessary in the sense that if they exist, then they cannot be caused or go out of

existence, and both are independent beings.

The fact that the LNG exists in all worlds while the FNG exists only in some does have implications. In chapter four the ontological argument will be discussed in depth. The basic ontological argument states God is a being with maximal greatness, in other words, the greatest possible being (GPB), or the greatest being who could possibly exist. For now let us say the LNG can be the GPB, while the FNG cannot. As Alvin Plantinga puts it:

Most of us who believe in God think of him as a being than whom it's not possible that there be a greater. But we don't think of him as a being who, had things been different, would have been powerless or uninformed or of dubious moral character. God doesn't just happen to be a greatest possible being; he couldn't have been otherwise.⁶

God, if he is the LNG, exists in all possible worlds and is eternal, independent, omniscient and omnipotent, etc. in all of the worlds. No other being could possibly control or outwit him. He could not decline in power or wisdom and could not lose his grip on himself or anything that he has created. The same can not be said about the FNG because there is at least one possible world where he does not exist at all. Norman Geisler and William Watkins, proponents of the FNG, state:

It is *logically* possible that nothing ever existed, including a necessary being. . . . However, if there is a necessary being, then it is not possible that he not exist, since by definition, a necessary being cannot *not* exist. . . . In short, a *logically* necessary being need not necessarily actually exist. But if an *actually* necessary being exists, then it must necessarily actually exist. It cannot not exist.⁷

Briefly put there might not have been a necessary being, but if there is one, then he cannot come into existence or go out of existence. Given this description a number of questions arise. Why does this FNG exist at all? If the FNG is logically contingent, why is it impossible for it to go out of existence if it does exist? To aid this discussion the terms *E-property*, *N-property* and *C-property* will now be defined.

(2.8) *F* is an *E-property* of *x* if *F* belongs to *x* in each world in which *x* exists.

(2.9) *F* is an *N-property* of *x* if and only if *x* exists in every possible world and *F* is an *E-property* of *x*.

(2.10) *F* is a *C-property* of *x* if *x* has *F* in some possible worlds but not in others.⁸

Although these properties are mainly considered to be internal properties and not relational properties, they can also include the latter. For example, if there are secondary necessary beings, that is, beings which exist in all possible worlds and are caused by some primary necessary being, then for that secondary necessary

being, 'being caused' is an *N-property*.

By the above definitions, a logically necessary being's *E-properties* would be identical with its *N-properties*. This is due to the fact that an *E-property* is a property it has in every world in which it exists, and it exists in every possible world. Logically contingent beings could have both *E-properties* and *C-properties*. An *E-property* is essential to the existence of the entity at hand, e.g., being a person is an *E-property* for every person that exists. *C-properties* are attributes like being bald, snub-nosed or the meanest man in North Dakota.⁹ After all, it scarcely seems plausible to say if Jones was not bald, then he could not exist. What may be somewhat more controversial is the statement that logically necessary beings can have *C-properties*.

Some have argued that logically necessary beings could have only *N-properties* (which are for a logically necessary being identical with *E-properties*). But unless there is only one possible world, this does not seem to be the case, at least not with regard to relational properties. For example, let us take a realist approach to numbers. Let us suppose, as seems likely, that if realism regarding numbers is true, then numbers exist necessarily in every possible world. There could be a world *W* where the number two is Smith's favorite number, while in world *W'*, three is Smith's favorite number. Therefore, in *W* the number two would have a different property than in *W'*. If one does not think the same result would apply to concrete necessary beings as to abstract ones, then just recast the example into the following. In *W* Smith believes in the LNG, while in *W'* Smith does not. Thus, the LNG would have different relational properties in different worlds. Therefore, for the LNG being believed in by Smith is a *C-property*. But what about intrinsic properties? Here, on at least some models the LNG would also have intrinsic *C-properties*. If it is the case that the LNG could have actualized a different possible world, that is, there are different universes he could have created, then his knowledge would be different. If in *W* he created Sarah, while in *W'* he created Sarah and Rebekah, and in *W''* he created Sarah, Rebekah and Mary, then his knowledge of what he created would be different in all three worlds. He would be omniscient in all three, but what his omniscience consisted of would be different.

By definition the FNG cannot have *N-properties* but it must have *E-properties*. These *E-properties* are characteristics it must have in order to exist at all. If, as shall be argued below, the concept of being personal is analytic to the concept of God, then 'being personal' is an *E-property* for the FNG. But what about omnipotence, omniscience and omnibenevolence? Are they *E-* or *C-properties* for the FNG? Here we must make a distinction in the differing concepts of the FNG. There are two basically different concepts. One is that such concepts are not *E-properties*, that the FNG could have omnipotence, omniscience and omnibenevolence in some worlds in which he existed but not others. The other concept is that such attributes are *E-properties*, that the FNG must have such properties in every world in which he exists. Combined with the principle of existential causation (every finite being must have a cause for its existence) the result is that the FNG exists as an omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent

being (among other things) in all worlds except one; the empty world where nothing exists. Both concepts of the FNG must be examined.

First let us consider the concept of the FNG which holds that properties such as omnipotence are *C-properties*. The FNG in this understanding is, in some worlds, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. But in others he is, as Plantinga says, weak, ill-informed and of dubious character. Whether anyone actually believes this I do not know, but it is certainly a conceivable position, and therefore should be examined.

Another distinction must be made. Let us look at the difference between a particular kind of object and the being which may be that particular kind of object. For example, let us distinguish between a cube and a lump of clay which could be formed into a cube. Is this cube necessary or contingent? It depends upon what is meant by the question. If one means the existence of the lump of clay, or the existence of the lump of clay as a cube, then it is contingent. After all, it seems the matter which makes up the lump of clay might not have existed at all, or the lump of clay may have been formed into some other shape, say a sphere.

On the other hand, if we are speaking of the clay as having certain properties if it is to be a cube, then it is necessary. It is not necessary that the lump of clay be a cube, but if it is a cube, then it must have 12 edges. This is analytic necessity *De Dicto*. Similarly, when speaking of the FNG, a being who is the FNG exists contingently and is the FNG contingently, but if he is the FNG, then necessarily *De Dicto* he has certain properties.¹⁰ It may be essential to the concept of the FNG that it be omnipotent, but there is no apparent reason omnipotence is essential to the being that is the FNG (see below). Just as it is contingent that the lump of clay be a cube with 12 edges, but true *that as a cube* it has 12 edges, so the being that is the FNG is not the FNG *De Re* and therefore not essentially and necessarily omnipotent.

In contrast the LNG is necessarily existent *De Re*, necessarily the LNG and necessarily has all the *N-properties* of the LNG, although the *C-properties* may differ from world to world. Against this, a person who is the FNG is not necessarily existent, not necessarily the FNG and therefore, as will be argued below, does not have all the properties of the FNG in all the worlds in which he exists, although there may be properties which he does have in all the worlds he exists in.

To clarify the above, it may be helpful to think of God as a kind of status, that only an individual with certain properties may be. Thomas Morris states, "[M]any philosophers nowadays think of deity or divinity as a role, or office, or ontological status which a particular individual will have, or fail to have, depending upon what other properties that individual has. On this way of thinking, deity is something like a second-order attribute much like the attribute of worship-worthiness."¹¹

Taking Morris' concept of what it is to be God, we can see that in the case of the LNG, a person who is the LNG is necessarily *De Re* the LNG, and therefore necessarily has all of the first, second and third-order properties of the LNG. With the weaker concept of the FNG, which is now being considered, we can see that a person who is the FNG does not have all of the first-order attributes of God

necessarily. Therefore neither does he have the second and third-order attributes necessarily, since the higher order attributes are dependent upon the first. In short, he does not have the status of God necessarily.

To show the reasoning behind this we can consider the following example. It seems true that if something is a person in one world, then he is a person in every world in which he exists. One cannot be a person in one world but a credit card or watermelon in other worlds. 'Being a person' seems to be an *E-property* for the FNG. If he is a person in one world then he is a person in all the worlds in which he exists. The question now is, are such properties as 'being omniscient' *E-properties* or only *C-properties*? I see no reason for thinking that 'being omniscient' is an *E-property* for the weaker concept of what God is, the FNG. Let us imagine a situation where in one world a person who is the FNG in other worlds knows everything that can be known except what the capital of Peru is. This person could not be God in that world, since God by definition is omniscient, and an omniscient being knows all propositions. But if 'being omniscient' is an *E-property*, then the person who is the FNG in some worlds must know all propositions in all worlds in which he exists. Therefore, he could not be the same person who in this possible world knows all propositions save what the capital of Peru is. Why think that a person who knew everything but forget what the capital of Peru is could not be the same person, even though by definition he could not be God? In the case of the LNG there is a reason. As will be argued the LNG must be identical to the being with maximal greatness, or the greatest possible being (GPB). Omniscience is analytic to the concept of the GPB, and therefore an *E-property* of the GPB. For the LNG *E-properties* = *N-properties*, therefore omniscience is an *N-property* for the GPB. The GPB having all of his *N-properties* in all possible worlds, must be omniscient in all worlds. Therefore, it is logically impossible for him not to know everything.

This argument does not work for the FNG. He is not the GPB, since he does not have all his great-making properties in all worlds. By definition, the FNG exists in some worlds but not in others. A person who existed in all worlds and had his great-making properties exemplified in all worlds would have more greatness than the FNG.¹² Since the FNG is not the GPB, the argument given above that the LNG must be essentially omniscient, among other things, does not succeed for the FNG. Hence, there seems to be no reason to think that for any person who is not the GPB, the knowledge of what the capital of Peru is, is an *E-property*. To say that knowledge of Peru's capital, or any proposition, is an *E-property* for a person is to say that without that knowledge that person could not exist; a statement which is strongly counter-intuitive and contrary to any plausible definition of person.¹³ It seems that similar arguments can be constructed concerning other properties, like omnipotence and goodness. This being the case, then there is no reason to think that a person who is the FNG need be the FNG in every world.

One might make the same point in reverse order. It seems easy to imagine the existence of some God-like being with immense, though limited, power and knowledge existing in some world. One could imagine another world, much like

the first, but in this world the being would have even more knowledge and power. Thinking of this God-like person, one can easily imagine him without fear of internal contradiction as having greater degrees of knowledge and power. One would never have to imagine that in order for him to have more knowledge and power, he would have to be a numerically different person. This process could be kept up indefinitely, until one could imagine him possessing all possible knowledge and power. In a world where he had these, he would be the FNG. However, there still seems to be no reason to think he would have to be a different person from the person who in other possible worlds had immense but somewhat limited knowledge and power.

The following arguments can be raised against the proposition that one may endlessly increase or decrease in knowledge and still remain the same person. First, it may be held that a human person could increase in knowledge to a point where he would no longer be considered human, rather he would become some sort of super-human creature. This may be true, but it does not change the argument. For even if one's knowledge grew to the extent that one became super-human, there is no reason to think that a numerically different person would appear. The person would still be the same, even if radically altered. Second, there is the problem that one's knowledge cannot gravitate between finite to infinite amounts. If one starts out with a finite amount of knowledge, then no matter how much knowledge is added, one will always have a finite amount.¹⁴ The only way that a creature with a finite amount of knowledge could obtain an infinite amount, would be by receiving it all at once. This too is irrelevant. It seems possible to have an infinite amount of knowledge and not be omniscient. For example, one could know all the natural numbers and not know anything about geography. This being the case, then the FNG could have varying amounts of infinite knowledge and not be omniscient. There seems to be no reason to think this would not still be the same person. Even if the being gained or lost an infinite amount of knowledge, it seems it would remain numerically the same person.

A third, and quite different argument against the position defended here will now be discussed. An analogy to the question of God's necessity can be seen in the following statement. Water need not exist, but if it exists, then necessarily it is H_2O . It could be argued that the FNG need not exist, but if he does, then necessarily he is the FNG. He could not be some other kind of being, not even a being with immense but limited power.

The case of God is different than the case of water. God by definition has properties like omnipotence, which involve power. But, as in the case of omniscience, there seems to be no reason for any person other than the one who is the GPB to have omnipotence as an *E-property*. In the case of water, on the other hand, it does not seem possible that water is other than H_2O . In this case, it is a matter of finding out that a certain kind of thing is really *x*. This is the necessity of identity. Everything necessarily is itself, or, is self-identical. Therefore, since water is H_2O , it is necessarily H_2O . As has been often pointed out, even if there were some substance that had all of the macro properties of water, e.g., wetness, taste,

weight, transparency, etc., if the chemical structure were XYZ, then that substance would not be water, but merely a different substance with water like macro-properties.¹⁵

The relevance to the question of the FNG is that all persons are necessarily themselves. In all possible worlds where a person who is the FNG exists, he is the same person. This too exemplifies the necessity of identity. However, in the case of the FNG, if one imagined that he was omnipotent or omniscient in all worlds where he exists, it would be a matter of a certain person having a certain property, not the property of being identical with himself. If a person has the property of being a FNG, then necessarily he will have the property of being omniscient. This by itself does not mean that he could not be the same person if he lacked those properties. Similarly, there may be possible worlds where water has the property of boiling at a different temperature (at the same air pressure) than it does in the actual world. Water would then have a different property, but it would still be the same substance. Thus, there is a significant disanalogy to the example of water necessarily being H_2O . Being H_2O is an *E-property* for water, because 'being identical with oneself' is an *E-property* for everything. Being omniscient or omnipotent is not an *E-property* for the person who is the FNG. It is a *C-property*, and therefore varies from world to world.

Four different kinds of necessity were specified.¹⁶ One of these, 'metaphysical necessity', or the necessity of identity and essential properties as I have named it here, does not necessitate the existence of the person who is the FNG to have the properties necessary for being the FNG in every world in which he exists. What about the other three kinds of necessity? The first is the necessity of tautology. This obviously has no relevance. Neither can the necessity of the synthetic a priori give one reason to believe a person who is the FNG has all the requisite properties of the FNG in all worlds in which he exists. This kind of necessity demonstrates the impossibility of some object having two contradictory properties at once, e.g., the impossibility of a surface being colored red and being colored green at the same place and time. Again, this is irrelevant to the topic at hand. The position is not that a person who is the FNG has contradictory properties in the same world, but rather that he may have differing properties in different worlds. Further, synthetic necessities essentially contain reference to objects or concepts external to the thing at hand. The FNG is by definition, ontologically independent, and therefore cannot contain as part of its essence a reference to any other being.

Finally, there is analytic necessity which holds there are certain properties that are analytic or definitional to the concept of differing beings, e.g., 'being material' is analytic to the concept of 'being a chair'. In the case of the LNG one can see that existing as omnipotent is analytic to the LNG. By definition the LNG exists as God in all possible worlds. Since 'being omnipotent' is analytic to the concept of God, then for a person who is the LNG, being omnipotent in every world is analytic. But for a person who is the FNG, the situation is different. In this situation what is analytic, is that in every world in which a person who is the FNG exists as the FNG, he is omnipotent. But the analyticity flows from the concept of the FNG, not from

the person who is the FNG. We can conclude that anyone who is the FNG in any world is necessarily omnipotent in that world. The analyticity ends here. There is nothing analytic about the person who is the FNG in some worlds not having all the properties of the FNG in other worlds. Therefore, all four kinds of necessity fail to give any reason for thinking a person who is the FNG in some worlds must have all the properties analytic to being the FNG in every world in which that person exists. This implies that there are worlds in which a person who is the FNG in this world (assuming his existence) exists, but does not have the properties he has in the worlds where he is the FNG. So, by the weak definition of the FNG, there are worlds where he is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent. However there are also worlds where he is weak, ill-informed, and of dubious character. To anyone with a robust concept of God, this by itself seems unacceptable. Unfortunately, there are additional problems with the concept of the FNG.

Thus far we have been dealing with the weaker concept of the FNG; there are many worlds where the FNG does not exist. There is also what I have termed the stronger concept of the FNG in which the only world where he does not exist is the empty world.¹⁷ The strongest and most detailed defenders of this position are Thomists Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan. Their basic position is:

It is important to note that the 'necessity' here is not logical but ontological (factual). God is not a logically necessary being. It is logically possible that nothing ever existed, including God. But it is actually false that nothing ever existed. . . . But composed existence is composed of actuality and potentiality. And what is composed is not pure actuality as such. And since an uncaused Cause is pure actuality, it follows that it cannot be divisible. . . . Now change is passing from a potentiality to an actuality; from what it could be to what it actually becomes. But unlimited existence has no potentiality; it is pure existence as such. It must be what it is and cannot be otherwise. . . . [I]f a necessary Being exists at all, it must exist necessarily; this is the only way a necessary being can exist.¹⁸

Before a serious analysis of the position defended above can be given, some of the terms used must be unpacked. These terms include potentiality, actuality and pure existence. An understanding of Geisler's and Corduan's position relies upon the understanding of these words. What is meant by potentiality? Put simply, potentiality is the possibility for change. Peter Angeles stated, "potential/potentiality. 1. Latent. 2. Existing as a possibility. . . . potential/potentiality (Aristotle). For Aristotle [and for Thomists like Geisler]: A potential can be actualized only by something already actualized which acts as a cause in the potential's actualization."¹⁹

For example, a red chair has the potentiality of becoming a green chair because it can be painted. An ignorant person has the potentiality of becoming a learned person. In essence a thing's potentiality is what it is possible to become.

This brings us to actuality. Actuality can be defined as: "1. The domain of factual events. 2. Existence; reality. 3. The achievement of a thing's full potential."²⁰ Coming to pure existence, Geisler defines this concept as, "[T]he

distinction between the Latin *esse* (to be) and *ens* (being, thing) is helpful. God is Pure *Esse* and our present *esse* is dependent upon him. Pure Existence must existentialize our potentiality for existence; otherwise we would not exist. God as Pure Actuality is actualizing everything that is actual and not merely potential."²¹ Geisler gives a couple of synonyms to Pure Existence, one of which is Pure Actuality or Act. Regarding Pure Act Peter Angeles states: "Pure Act. Sometimes *pure actuality*. 1. The completely actualized being, God, in whom there can never be any Potency. 2. That state or process in which everything is actualized, without in any way being dependent upon something else for its Actualization and activity."²² God is pure act, in whom there is no potentiality at all. Expanding on the concept of God as Pure Actuality Geisler writes:

The heart of Aquinas's metaphysics is the real distinction between essence (*what* something is) and existence (*that* which is) in all finite beings. Aristotle had distinguished between actuality and potentiality, but applied this only to things composed only of form and matter, not to the order of being as such. Aquinas takes Aristotle's distinction between act and potency and applies it to form (being).

Aquinas argues that only God is Pure Being, Pure Actuality, with no potentiality whatsoever.²³

Above two new terms, essence and existence, are introduced. The question arises, are these the same as potentiality and actuality? We have already seen there is good reason for thinking that for God, existence is equivalent to actuality. However, potentiality is not the same as essence, "God is Pure Actuality (Act); all creatures are composed of actuality (act) and potentiality (potency). Hence, finite things differ from God in that they have a limiting potential; God does not. . . The essence (whatness) and existence (isness) of all creatures are distinct. The essence and existence of God, on the other hand, are identical."²⁴ Thus, God does not have potentiality but does have essence; so the two concepts can not be the same.

According Thomisms, God is a being, indeed, Being itself. As Geisler states, "God alone is Being (I am-ness). Everything else merely *has* being. God's existence is identical to his essence. It is of his essence to exist."²⁵ For Thomism, God is Being itself, the one thing whose existence is *identical* with its essence. God is a being who by its very nature must exist, that is, to whom existence is analytic. This seems to be a plausible interpretation of the term 'it is of his essence to exist.' If one interprets things this way, we make God a LNG, contrary to what the authors state. The reason for this was stated in the early eighteenth century by Samuel Clarke, who said:

. . . [T]he only true idea of a self-existent or necessarily existing being is the idea of a being the supposition of whose non-existing is an express contradiction. For since it is absolutely impossible but there must be somewhat self-existent; that is, which exists by the necessity of its own nature; it is plain that necessity cannot be a necessity consequent upon any foregoing supposition, (because nothing can be antecedent to

that which is self-existent, . . .) but it must be a necessity absolutely such in its own nature. Now a necessity, not relatively or consequently, but absolutely such in its nature; is nothing else, but its being a plain impossibility or implying a contradiction to suppose the contrary.²⁶

Clarke's point can be expressed differently. If a thing's existence is identical with its essence, then it must be of its essence to exist. A being which exists out of its own necessity cannot be dependent for its existence upon anything else. Indeed, part of the definition of God is that he cannot be caused to exist or be prevented in his existence by anything else. If this is the case, then it would seem that God, the being whose essence it is to exist, should exist in all possible worlds. He could not fail to exist in any world. He cannot be prevented from existing by another, and since it is analytic to his nature to exist, then he could not fail to exist because of reasons internal to himself. As William Rowe states, "But a being has the reason for its existence within its own nature only if it exists in every possible world. And clearly if any being exists in every possible world then that being is such that its non-existence is absolutely impossible."²⁷

This plausible interpretation is not the meaning Geisler and Corduan intended. As shown above, they hold that there is one possible world where God does not exist. And if there is one possible world where God does not exist, then (by *Modus Tollens* from the premise that if God has his existence analytic to his essence then he exists in every world) God does not have his existence analytic to his essence. Therefore, God could not have his existence identical to his essence.

Another way to interpret above terms is to view them in the manner of Thomistic philosophy; the way they were used by Thomas and his followers. Simply put, God's existence is identical with his essence; God exists as a whole. All of his internal properties are *E-properties*, therefore he could not lack any of them. For example, being omniscient would be an *E-property* for God, he could not possibly exist without it. In other worlds, to be God is (partly) to know everything. In most cases one cannot say of human beings that we are our properties. For example, it would not be correct to say that I am my feet, in that I could not exist without them. But for God things are different. God *is* his knowledge of everything in the sense that this knowledge is part of his definition. Knowing that proposition is as much an *E-property* as being a person. This interpretation is consistent with Geisler and Corduan's theory and gives some meaning to the idea that God's existence is identical with his essence. All this really means is if God exists, then he cannot have any other properties than the ones he has. If this is the concept that Geisler is defending however, then using terms like, 'essence being identical with existence', and God being 'Pure Existence' are intelligible, though strange to modern ears.²⁸

Given the concept of the FNG on one hand and statements like 'God is pure Actuality', and 'God's existence is identical with his essence', problems of coherence begin to arise. What are the grounds for maintaining that God is Pure Actuality, with no potentiality at all? Why couldn't God change? Take some property *p* that God possesses; say he knows that Smith is bald. So *p* for God

would be the property of knowing that Smith is bald. Now on both the LNG and the FNG models of God, omniscience is an *E-property*, that is, in every possible world in which a person who is God exists as God, then he is omniscient. The question then can be asked as to why.

In the case of the LNG the answer is obvious. If one accepts that the only coherent concept of the LNG is the GPB, and given that omniscience is analytic to the GPB, then omniscience is analytic to the LNG. However, for the FNG the answer must be different. Existence as the GPB is not analytic to a person who is the FNG. The way in which Potentiality has been defined, that which something can become, leads one to say that the FNG has no potentiality for forgetting that Smith is bald. Knowing that Smith is bald is part of his essence. Why can't the FNG forget about the baldness of Smith? Stating this is because he has no potential to forget this is to beg the question. For then one would be saying the FNG cannot forget because he is unable to forget, when his ability to forget is the question at hand. There is a lack of positive reason for saying the FNG cannot change. There is nothing in the definition of the FNG that would make change impossible, except for defining him as being impossible to change, which is arbitrary if it is not analytic to his nature. One cannot just tack on 'immutability' to any being and have it plausibly attached for every possible world in which that being exists. One can have immutability in every possible world in which the being exists if and only if immutability is a conceptual truth which is entailed by the nature of the being at hand. With regard to the FNG, the lack of potentiality does not flow from any of the other concepts that are analytic to the FNG. Therefore, the lack of potentiality does not flow from the essence of the FNG. If it is not part of the essence of a person who is the FNG, then it is not is not an *E-property* of that person but rather a *C-property*. By the definition of *C-properties* given at the beginning of this chapter, lack of potentiality, and therefore immutability, is not an attribute of the FNG in every world in which he exists. The FNG may in fact be unchangeable in some worlds. However, this is merely a contingent fact about the FNG for those worlds, just as the fact that Smith is bald in some worlds is merely a contingent fact about Smith in those worlds. Things could have been different, worlds where the FNG was changeable or Smith was not bald could have been the actual world.

In addition to the absence of a positive reason for the lack of potentiality in the FNG are reasons which count negatively against this trait. There is by definition one possible world where the FNG does not exist; the empty world. Given this definition, the FNG certainly has the potential for non-existence. Logical contingency is part of the FNG's nature, and is therefore an *E-property*. So, if the potential for non-existence is there, then the FNG cannot be pure actuality, for there is at least one potentiality (non-existence) that is not being actualized. The FNG cannot exist as factually necessary in any world; the potential for non-existence is always there. God would be composed of both actuality and potentiality, since he is potentially non-existent. If he is potentially non-existent, then it seems possible for him to cease to exist. The FNG has no reason internal to himself which is his reason for existing, and by definition cannot be caused to exist or have a reason for

existing external to himself. So there seems to be no reason why, if the FNG does exist he cannot possibly cease to exist, or lose some of his properties.

A defender of the FNG might say there is a possibility that God did not exist. But if he does exist, then he does not have the potential for non-existence. Similarly, an acorn may have the potential to never to become an oak tree, but if it becomes one, it no longer has this potential. This analogy may be somewhat forced. After all, God in the classical understanding does not develop into his full stature as God, he always is God. Nevertheless, this line of reasoning may be challenged by pointing out that the FNG never attains the status of a being with the reason for his existence internal to himself.

In many ways the LNG and the FNG seem similar. They are supposed to have many of the same properties. The only properties which are different are those from existing or failing to exist in every possible world and any other properties that are entailed by this. In actuality the matter goes much deeper and the differences are far more profound. There are only three possible accounts given for the existence of any thing. First, the reason to exist is internal to the object; second, the reason to exist is external to the object; and third, there is no reason for the object to exist. By definition the concept of God which we are investigating excludes the second possibility; there can be no cause or reason for the existence of God external to him. The first possibility, the reason to exist is internal to the object, is exemplified by the LNG. However, the FNG cannot be based on this possibility for reasons given above by Clarke. This leaves only the third possibility, that the FNG exists for no reason at all. This is a conceptual truth about the FNG. His existence, and the properties that he has are the result of chance. On this matter Ronald Nash states:

By definition, a factually necessary being does not exist in all possible worlds. (Only a logically necessary being could exist in every possible world.) Once one recognizes, however, that there are possible worlds in which a factually necessary God does not exist, it makes sense to ask why God exists in the *real* world. . . [O]nce a theist acknowledges that there are possible worlds in which God does not exist, the question as to why God exists in the real world gains force. Moreover, what prevents this factually necessary being from existing by chance, that is, without reason?²⁹

I would add to the above that not only is there nothing to prevent a factually necessary being from existing by chance, but necessarily, he must exist by chance. The FNG is a creature of chance; that he is and what he is are Brute Facts, without reason or explanation. A being such as the FNG has no reason for ontological stability. What exists for no reason at all cannot be stable, for there is nothing to support it. One student wrote that the difference between the LNG and the strong version of the FNG, was 'trivial'.³⁰ The reason given was that the LNG exists in all worlds, while the strong version of the FNG exists in all worlds save one, the empty world. While in a sense this is true, in another the difference is not trivial but all important. The non-existence of the FNG in that one world means that the FNG is not independent, but rather the result of chance.

Before I go on to elucidate what this all means for the concept of God, I shall mention several attempts to rescue ontological stability for the FNG. First is the appeal to the Principle of Existential Causation (PEC). This states that all finite beings need a present cause for their existence at every moment of their existence. The relevance to the FNG can be seen in the following statements. If it is true all finite beings necessarily (in all worlds) need a cause for their existence, then if any finite beings exist, an infinite being must also exist. Therefore, either nothing exists or an infinite God exists. Based on this, one may believe that the FNG might be 'locked into' his infinite state as there are only two possible options for his existence. He could not possible lose some of his attributes and become a finite being, for the only alternative to his being infinite is his non-existence. This shall be examined in chapter five.

There are three additional ways in which a defender of the FNG might try and save the concept of this being; timelessness, simplicity, and omnipotence. First, there is the defense of the ontological stability of the FNG from timelessness. This is the doctrine that God does not exist in time, and as such, is strongly immutable.³¹ By definition change can only take place in time, and if God does not exist in time, then he cannot change.³² If God cannot change, then there is no possibility of him passing out of existence or changing in some other way. Therefore, God would be ontologically stable. The problem with this defense is that although the above may be true in some worlds, including the actual world, it does not seem to be true in all worlds. That is to say, why could there not be worlds in which the FNG existed in time and changed? If it is admitted that there are worlds where the FNG can change, then there is no reason why the actual world could not have been one where the FNG did change. If being able to change depends upon being in time, then if the FNG changed, he would be in time. To say that the FNG cannot change because he is not in time does not solve the problem; for one could ask why he is not in time. In the case of the FNG, ultimately, it is a matter of chance. According to classical theism, *everything*, including time, that is not God depends upon God for its existence. Time depends upon God, and not vice versa. If, as seems to be the case, change entails the existence of time, then if God changed, there would be time. Therefore, God cannot be immutable because he is not in time.

It might be argued that if the FNG could change, and the PEC were true, then the FNG would cease to exist. By granting the PEC, nothing would exist, and this cannot be true because by stipulation, there is only one world where there is nothing, the empty world. This is a fairly weak argument for the theory that the FNG cannot cease to exist. One can see from this that the model which depicts the FNG as existing in all possible worlds save the empty world is too simple. It would seem that there would be a) worlds in which the FNG exists undisturbed, b) the empty world, and c) worlds where the FNG exists for a time and then falls into nothingness. The argument that God cannot change just because he is timeless thus fails to guarantee ontological stability. This brings us to the argument from simplicity.

The doctrine of God's simplicity is an odd one. It maintains that God is

indivisible, that he is not composed of parts, e.g., of actuality and potentiality, of essence and existence; in brief, he is one, without any internal distinctions. This is a difficult doctrine to understand for it seems to imply that all of God's properties are really one. As an example omniscience and omnipotence would be the same thing in God's being. Nonetheless, this doctrine has long had a place in Christian theology. Many of the greatest Christian theologians accepted it.³³ In recent times there has been a great deal of discussion about this doctrine, with some defending it³⁴ and others attacking it.³⁵ For the purpose of this discussion, we will assume that simplicity is a coherent doctrine. However, the question still remains, can simplicity be coherently ascribed to the FNG? The answer is no. Again, the only way in which a defender of the FNG can hold that God is simple, is by circular reasoning.

Among the implications of the doctrine of God's simplicity is that there is no potentiality in God, no possibility of change. Again, one must ask why? For example, take some property of God, such as knowing how many daughters I have.³⁶ Orthodox defenders of the doctrine of God's simplicity have always held that even if many properties are somehow one in God's being, they are nonetheless distinct in the world. Therefore, God does know how many daughters I have and an infinite number of other propositions. The question which now arises, is why, on the basis of the doctrine of simplicity, could God not forget how many daughters I have? If in response it is said that God could not forget because he has no potential to forget, then one could ask why God has no potential to forget? What is it about him which required that he cannot change in any way? According to the doctrine of simplicity, God is an uncomposed being; he has no parts. All of his properties are entailed by his essence. For God *is* his essence; what he is and what he can be.

This response, however, does not lead anywhere. Even if one states God cannot change because his essence is identical with his existence, then it can immediately be asked why. Why is God's essence identical with his existence? As previously pointed out, in the case of the LNG one can see why God's essence is the same as his existence; why he necessarily exists and has the properties that he does. If being the LNG is analytic to the GPB, and being omniscient is analytic to the LNG, then knowing how many daughters I have is analytic to being omniscient. In the case of the FNG, this flow of analytic entailment does not work. The FNG is not the GPB, and therefore, for a person who is the FNG, does not have the properties of being the FNG analytic to his being. This being the case, being omniscient is not analytic to the person who is the FNG. Therefore, knowing how many daughters I have is not analytic to a person who is the FNG and not part of his nature or essence. Assuming this is true, then there is no reason why the FNG could not change, and granting the doctrine of the PEC, cease to exist. He may not do this in some worlds, but the fact that he does not, is a matter of chance not necessity.

In short, the defender of the FNG who maintains God is a simple being who has no potentiality, is operating under the fallacy of the De Dicto-De Re concepts. This fallacy confuses different types of necessity. For example, if a woman is sitting,

then necessarily she is sitting, but it is not necessary that she sit; she could not lie down, or walk around, etc. Similarly, if God were simple, then his essence would be identical with his existence and he would have no potentiality, but for a person who is the FNG it is not necessary that he be simple. Further, it is not even possible. Since the properties he has are a matter of chance, that is, exist for no reason, it is necessary that the properties he has exist for no reason. Anything which exists for no reason at all is logically contingent. So, if he and his properties are contingent, then they are necessarily contingent. If necessarily contingent, then necessarily they are not necessary. And if necessarily they are not necessary, then they could not possibly be part of his essence, or identical with his existence. Instead, it is part of his essence that the properties he has (other than *E-properties*) be contingent. Therefore, necessarily the FNG has potentiality and cannot be simple. If God is simple, then only the LNG could have this attribute.

The last property the FNG might have which could be thought to ensure ontological stability is omnipotence; the concept of being all-powerful. The reason for this might be that in all worlds where the FNG is omnipotent he can do anything which is logically possible. It is true that it is logically possible for the FNG to exist stably in some particular world. Therefore, it might be argued that in all worlds where a person who is the FNG and is omnipotent, then that person may be able to prevent his dissolution. If an omnipotent being can do anything logically possible, and it is possible for the FNG to exist with ontological stability, then in every world where the FNG is omnipotent he ought to be able to ensure his own ontological stability. It might be argued that in all of the worlds where the FNG exists omnipotently, he is ontologically stable. Therefore, a coherent model is established for a God who exists only in some worlds and is nevertheless omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, uncaused, and indestructible in others.

It is not obvious that a being who uses his own power to keep himself in existence would not be self-caused. After all, by definition a being who uses his own power to keep himself in existence would be causing himself to exist. If this is the case, it would seem that this concept would fall prey to the objection given by Geisler and Corduan; a self-caused being is impossible. So again, omnipotence could not ensure ontological stability.

Another reason why omnipotence can not save the FNG is because omnipotence cannot be coherently ascribed to this being. Not only is the FNG not omnipotent in some worlds in which he exists, he is not omnipotent in any world where he exists. If this is true, omnipotence cannot give the FNG ontological stability, and therefore, the FNG cannot be the God of classical theism. To explain we need to examine various concepts of omnipotence. They are:

(2.11) A being is omnipotent in a world in which it exists if and only if it successfully does all the things it tries to do in that world.

(2.12) A being is omnipotent in any world in which it exists if and only if it successfully does all the things it tries to do in that world, and in all nearby worlds.

Here what is meant by nearby world is that for some world W , a nearby world is exactly like W save that there is one difference (and all the implications of that). For W' to be nearby to W would mean that W' was exactly like W save that, for example, the position of one electron was slightly different in W' than in W .

(2.13) A being is omnipotent if and only if it would successfully accomplish anything it tried to do in any world in which it exists.

(2.14) A being is omnipotent if and only if it would successfully accomplish anything that it tried to do in all possible worlds.³⁷

These are the main alternatives. There are several others that are conceivable, however they do not seem to be real possibilities. For example, one definition is where a being would successfully accomplish anything it tried to do in one world W , and in certain other worlds, but not in the worlds near W . This is not a logically possible alternative. It would make into a matter of necessity that which would have been without a reason. Let us examine the above alternatives individually. The first version of omnipotence, (2.11) is obviously too weak. For example, consider the famous philosophical entity McEar. McEar can only do one thing, scratch his left ear. Let us consider some world where McEar exists and attempts to scratch his left ear. Further, let us assume that this is the only thing that McEar ever tries to do and that he is successful in doing it. By the definition in (2.11) McEar is considered to be omnipotent. This seems to be self-evidently wrong. Just being successful in all one does, does not make one omnipotent or all powerful. Next we will consider (2.12). It should be pointed out that there is an ambiguity regarding the term 'nearby world'. In relation to world W this could mean either worlds that are *next* to W , in the sense that there are no worlds 'between' that world and W , or merely worlds that are close to W . What is meant by the first definition is that for a world W and the next world W' , W' differs from W in one small regard, and there is no other world which differs in the same way that W' differs from W , and yet is more like W than W' . For example if W' is just like W , and differs from W only in that one electron is some small distance from where that electron would be in W , then there is no world W'' , which is just like W save that in W'' the electron is closer to the position of the electron in W than the position of the electron in W' is. The second definition means that for a world W' to be nearby another world W , then W' is quite similar to W . This statement is much looser than the first.

Both of these definitions create problems in relation to the understanding of the term omnipotence. The second definition of 'nearby' is so loose that it has no rigorous meaning and a rigorous meaning is needed. The first definition appears to be incoherent. For just as in a line, between any two points there is always another point. In the case of possible worlds, it seems that for any two worlds, W and W' , no matter how close, there would always be another world between them. When considering the position of the electron for example, no matter how close the position of the electron in W' was to that of the electron in W , it seems it would always be possible to coherently conceive of another world W'' , where the position

of the electron is closer to that of W than W' . If this is true, the first definition of nearby is incoherent. Therefore, this approach may collapse before it begins. However, let us ignore these criticisms and see what else can be said. For the purpose of this discussion, those worlds which are allegedly so close to W so that no other worlds can be closer, will be called worlds next to W .

Let us presume there is some world W , and some being, say Zeus, who is purportedly omnipotent. For Zeus to be omnipotent in W , he would have to be successful in accomplishing anything he tried to do in W , and in all the worlds next to W . He could, however, fail to accomplish everything he tried to do in other worlds, even ones which were fairly close to W , but not in W or the worlds next to W . For example, assume there is some task A , which Zeus wishes to accomplish. We will also assume that W is the actual world, W' is a world next to W , and W'' is a world that is fairly close but not next to W . According to this definition of omnipotence, Zeus would successfully accomplish task A in W , and in W' and all other worlds next to W , but could fail to accomplish task A in W'' . Is this a coherent account of omnipotence? I think not.

It must be remembered that in this definition of omnipotence, we are speaking of the FNG, who does not have omnipotence analytic to his nature. Therefore, the FNG cannot have omnipotence as an *E-property*. As omnipotence cannot be given by another, then in any world in which he purportedly has omnipotence, he has it for no reason. He does not have it for a reason intrinsic or extrinsic to himself so conversely he has it for no reason at all. It can be asked why, even if there is one world where the FNG is omnipotent, is it the case that in all nearby or next worlds he is omnipotent. Let us recall the definition of next or nearby world. It is a world just like some other world, but with one difference. Again let us use the electron example: one electron is in a different location by one nanometer than in the world it is nearby. If the FNG has the property of omnipotence for no reason, then in every world in which he exists he is either omnipotent or fails to be omnipotent for no reason. Why would the FNG have omnipotence in one world and also in all worlds next to W ? Since the FNG has omnipotence for no reason, there is no reason why he could not fail to have omnipotence in a world next to W .

To clarify, let us suppose that the FNG, called Zeus, exists in some world W , and is omnipotent there, that is, in W he successfully accomplishes all he attempts to do. Now, according to the counter-factual definition of omnipotence, Zeus must also be able to do all he tries to do in all of the worlds next to W . Imagine a next world W' , which is just like W except in one respect. In W , Zeus tries to move one electron one nanometer in a certain direction, task A . In W , Zeus succeeds in performing A while in W' Zeus fails to accomplish A . According to the counter-factual definition of omnipotence, W' is not a possible world. Why is W' impossible? As demonstrated above in W Zeus has the power that he has for no reason. The power to do A (or anything else) belongs to Zeus for no reason, and necessarily so. He could not have it by nature, nor could it be given to him. There is no reason, intrinsic or extrinsic, why he would have the power to accomplish A in W or any other world. Similarly, in W' he would fail to have it for no reason. Further, in any

possible world, he would have or fail to have this power for no reason. Let us designate the power to accomplish A as P . Since P is either had or not had by Zeus for no reason, then it is a contingent truth that Zeus has or fails to have this power. There are worlds where Zeus has P and worlds where he does not. Even though there are differences between W' and some other world that is not nearby to W , none of these differences are relevant. By definition Zeus has or fails to have P for no reason; nothing else in any of the possible worlds affects whether Zeus has P or not.

To summarize, assume W is the actual world and Zeus is the FNG who has the power P to perform some action A . Also suppose that in W Zeus successfully performs A . Then assume there is some next world W' , where Zeus attempts to perform A and fails, because in that world he lacks P at the time he attempts to do A . In all other respects W and W' are identical. Since in the FNG concept of God, Zeus has or fails to have P for no reason at all, then W' could have been the actual world rather than W . In other words, there is no reason that W is the actual world rather than W' . It is strictly a matter of chance; the absence of any reason. This being the case, Zeus is able to perform all the things he tries to do for no reason. In short, he just got lucky. It seems self-evident that a being who is able to successfully accomplish everything he attempts to do in some world merely because he got lucky, cannot be omnipotent. It is also possible to conceive of some other action B , which in the actual world Zeus does not attempt to accomplish. If doing B is logically possible, and if Zeus is omnipotent, then necessarily Zeus should be able to perform B . However, if Zeus has the ability to accomplish B for no reason at all, then the following situation exist. There is some nearby world W'' where Zeus attempts to accomplish B and succeeds, and some other nearby world W^* just like W'' except Zeus attempts to accomplish B and fails. Had Zeus chosen to perform B , then either W'' or W^* would have been the actual world. Which one of them would have been actual would be a matter of chance. As Zeus could have failed to accomplish what he tried to do, he could not be omnipotent.

This same analysis can be applied to any action which Zeus might perform or attempt to perform. Thus, for any action Zeus makes in a world where he successfully accomplishes everything he attempts to do, there are worlds where Zeus attempts to do that action and fails. Since the only difference between the worlds where the deed is attempted and is successful and the worlds where the deed is attempted and is unsuccessful, is that, for no reason at all, Zeus either has or does not have the requisite power to accomplish these deeds. Whether Zeus is successful in all he attempts is a matter of chance. Even if in the actual world, Zeus exists and is successful in all he does, he is still not omnipotent. For there are nearby worlds where he fails, and this definition of omnipotence is incoherent. Further, as previously stated (2.11) is a radically unsatisfactory definition of omnipotence. So both (2.11) and (2.12) fail. This brings us to (2.13). If (2.13) fails, then the coherence of the FNG fails, for (2.14) is the LNG.

It can be shown that (2.13) also fails. From the discussion above we can see the FNG has the powers it has for no reason. Unless omnipotence is an *E-property*, a being who is not the GPB will not have omnipotence as an *E-property*. So except

for the LNG, no being will have omnipotence in all worlds in which it exists. Defenders of the FNG might say the FNG is omnipotent in all worlds in which he exists because the only world where he does not exist is the empty world. In this model worlds exist where the FNG exists for a time and then relapses into nothingness. Even if the FNG existed and successfully accomplished all he tried to do, he would still not be omnipotent, because he could have tried to perform some action, failed and disappeared from existence. This means the only coherent doctrine of omnipotence is (2.14), and (2.14) entails the LNG. If the above reasoning is correct, then only the LNG can coherently be thought of as being omnipotent. This means the categorization given above is incorrect. It was previously stated that there are three types of worlds: the empty world, worlds where the FNG exists unchanged and worlds where the FNG exists but then changes and disappears. If the criticisms I have given are correct, then the FNG cannot be omnipotent.

There has been at least one more attempt to save the notion of the FNG. David Schrader recently³⁸ criticized the concept that God's existence is logically necessary. However, Schrader does not want to have a God whose existence is merely contingent, for that does an injustice to our concept for God. Unlike Geisler, he does not maintain that there is only one world where God does not exist. Rather, depending upon the development of modal logic in this century, he puts forth two different models of God where God is not logically necessary, where in fact there are many worlds in which God does not exist, but where there are clusters of worlds accessible to each other in some way, and not accessible to other worlds in the same way. For example, he says that in all worlds where there is action, God exists, but not necessarily in all worlds where there is no action. Schrader states:

I have now given two notions of necessity, praxeological necessity and what I have chosen to call metaphysical necessity. It seems that the legitimate demands placed on the notion of divine necessity by the concern that God be the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the universe, that God be the ground of all being, etc., are perfectly well satisfied by either of the above notions of necessity.³⁹

In praxiologically accessible worlds, God exists in all those worlds in which there is action. In metaphysically accessible worlds, God exists in all those worlds where there is a temporal succession. In all of the worlds where there is action, for example, only other worlds in which there is also action would be praxiologically accessible. Thus, God would exist in all of the 'important' worlds, which is good enough maintains Schrader, even if he doesn't exist in all worlds.

Although initially attractive, Schrader's proposal seems fatally flawed to me. Many of the criticisms I have already given seem to apply here. Let us consider the criticism, and all the debilitating consequences which accompany it, that God would exist for no reason at all. More to the point however, is in making his assertions about the 'praxeological' or 'metaphysically necessary' concepts of God, Schrader must make important assumptions. In the case of the praxeological model,

he must assume that any world which contains action will also contain God. And in the case of the metaphysically necessary model, he must assume that any world which contains temporal succession also contains God. In other words, he must maintain it is necessarily true that there can be no action or temporal succession without God. It is at these crucial points that the requisite argument is lacking. Why do action and temporal succession need God to exist? If God exists for no reason, which on any other model than the LNG he must, then why can't action and temporal succession also exist for no reason? In the absence of any compelling argument, I see no reason to assume that they cannot. In brief, Schrader's argument may resemble Geisler's. Geisler states that the Principle of Existential Causality is a necessary truth, and therefore finite being must have a transcendent ground. Schrader states that it is necessarily true that action and temporal succession must have a transcendent ground. Unless these principles are established they cannot serve the purpose of providing a reason to think that God exists. And if they are established, then that God is the FNG rather than the LNG has to be established.

What else can be said in criticism of the FNG? Perhaps, why should the FNG exist? Remember, the FNG is supposedly omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, etc. Indeed, the FNG in those worlds where he exists as the FNG, is the being with maximal excellence. The question then arises; just how plausible is it to think that such a being could exist for no reason at all? The importance of this question stems from the nature of the issue at hand. As Ronald Nash said earlier, the main reason for introducing the concept of a necessary being is to explain the existence of contingent beings.⁴⁰ In the case of the LNG, why things exist in the way that they do has an explanation. The LNG exists out of his own internal necessity, and everything else that exists has its explanation in him. In the case of the FNG, one may try to explain the existence of everything else in terms of the FNG, but the FNG himself exists for no reason. Ultimately everything that exists, exists for no reason. The implications of this are comprehensive. In the LNG model of God, the LNG exists in every possible world, and being omnipotent and omniscient can determine which of the possible worlds will be instantiated. That is, the LNG will determine which of the possible worlds will be the actual one. However, with the FNG, which possible world will be instantiated is ultimately a matter of chance; e.g., one is instantiated rather than any of the rest for no reason at all. A logically contingent God ultimately does not explain anything. He creates a situation so that one attempts to give an accounting for a more complex being. Before all one had to account for was the universe, now one has to account for the FNG and the universe. Of course, the universe may be explained by an appeal to the FNG, but the FNG still has to account for his desire and ability to create the universe as it is.

John Hick protests the sort of reasoning which would make God, if he is not a logically necessary being, a creature of chance. In an essay defending factual necessity he states:

The reasoning here is that if a being does not exist by logical necessity, he merely happens to exist; and in this case he ought not to be worshiped as God. But in

presenting the dilemma: Either God exists necessarily, or he merely happens to exist, Findlay makes the very mistake for which he has rightly criticized the theologians. . . . If, for example, it is said that all human beings are either witches or non-witches, and it is then discovered that there is no such thing as a witch, it becomes pointless, and indeed misleading, to categorize everyone as a non-witch. Likewise, having concluded that the notion of necessary existence has no meaning, to continue to speak of things merely happening to exist, as though this stood in contrast to some other mode of existing, no longer has any validity.⁴¹

Hick's point is that if logically necessary existence is impossible, then it is pointless to talk about there being non-necessary (in the logical sense) existence, because that is the only kind of existence there could be. There is truth here. If it really is impossible for there to be logically necessary existence, then it is rather pointless to go on talking about contingent existence, because that is the only kind of existence there is, or could be. This does not, however, prove Hick's desired point. One could say, for example, all existing things would necessarily have the property of not existing with logical necessity. Necessarily, all things that are would be contingent, just as, necessarily, all things are self-identical. As all things would be contingent, we could then draw out the entailment that necessarily all things exist by chance, that is, without ultimate reason. This follows Hick's strictures, and yet is not only meaningful, but necessarily true.

The LNG and the FNG have certain properties in common. They are both supposed to be omnipotent, omniscient, eternal and indestructible, among other things. It has been argued above that the LNG has these properties as *E-properties*, and therefore as *N-properties*. It has also been argued that it is not plausible to think that the properties of omniscience and omnipotence are *E-properties* for the FNG. It seems that there would be worlds where the being who is the FNG exists but is not omniscient or omnipotent. In short, (granting the falsity of the PEC thesis, which shall be argued in chapter five) there are worlds where he is not the FNG.

Given the weak version of the FNG what are the 'odds' of getting the being who is the FNG to be the FNG? That is, if a person who is in some worlds the FNG is in other worlds a lesser being than the FNG, then what is the probability of this being the FNG in the actual world? Although in the worlds where he is the FNG he is omnipotent (theoretically, ignoring the criticisms above) there are other worlds where he is quite weak. Let us for the moment ignore all the worlds where he does not exist and concentrate on the worlds where he does. This will include all the worlds where he exists as the FNG and those where he does not. Since he exists in all worlds as he does for no reason, what are the chances that he will exist as the FNG? It can be shown that the odds of him existing as the FNG are very remote, indeed infinitesimal. There may be an infinite number of worlds where he exists and is omniscient. But there would also be an infinite number of worlds where he exists and knows only 123, 456, 789 propositions. And there would be an infinite number of worlds where he exists and knows 123, 456, 788 propositions, and so on

for every other number of propositions. Also, even where the number of propositions is the same, which propositions are known could be quite different from world to world. Further, there are an infinite number of worlds where he knows an infinite number of propositions, but not all propositions, and which propositions he knows are different in different worlds, e.g., in some worlds he knows all propositions involving prime numbers, in others all propositions involving geometric forms, etc. So, even counting only those worlds in which the person who is the FNG in some of those worlds exists, the odds of getting by chance all the properties of the FNG seem quite remote.

To restate this argument, if there were a face die with a trillion faces on it, and one of the faces was painted red while all of the other faces were green, then on a normal roll the odds of the red face coming up would only be one in a trillion. Even if there were an infinite number of faces on the die, if there were a trillion green faces for every red face, there still would only be a one in a trillion chance of rolling a red face. Analogously, if the number of propositions known by the FNG is gotten by chance, and if there are a far greater number of chances that some number of propositions rather than all propositions will be known, then the chance that the being is the FNG will be quite trivial. Though there would be an infinite number of worlds where the being who is the FNG knew all propositions, there would also be an infinite number where he knew 1 proposition, an infinite number where he knew 2, and so on. So even considering only those worlds where the being exists at all, the odds of him being omniscient are infinitesimal. Thus, on its own terms, the theory that God is the FNG seems self-defeating.

It may be debated, looking at the strong version of the FNG where the only world in which the FNG does not exist is the empty world, that the above argument does not work. Apparently when looking at the strong version of the FNG, there is good reason to think that the FNG would almost certainly exist. In this version, there are an infinite number of worlds where the FNG exists, and only one world where he does not. This being the case, it would seem that there is only an infinitesimal chance that the FNG would fail to exist, since the world that is instantiated is instantiated instead of any of the other worlds for no reason at all. In essence, what this approach does is to display all conceivable worlds and then discount them as impossible, with the exception of the empty world and the worlds where the being who is the FNG exists as the FNG. If this analysis is correct, then the FNG would almost certainly exist.

This position seems badly flawed. To estimate what the chances of getting the FNG are, one must examine the concept of the FNG. Whether or not the world is empty is dependent upon the FNG, and the FNG is dependent for its existence upon chance. The 'odds' of getting by chance a being who knows all propositions is, as was shown above, infinitesimal. If one adds the premise of the PEC (only if a being knows all propositions can it exist) then all this means is it is supremely unlikely that anything exist. In this scenario, on one hand one would have worlds where the FNG existed because, by chance, he had all the required properties to be pure actuality. On the other hand one would have worlds where he did not obtain these

requisite properties, and thus neither he or anything else could exist; in other words, empty worlds. It is more likely for the FNG not to obtain all the requisite properties than it is for him to obtain them, the odds are far greater that the world would be empty rather than one where the FNG (according to the implications of the PEC) and other things exist. Indeed, it would seem the odds of getting the empty world are infinitely greater than getting a world where the FNG exists. For every chance that the FNG would know all propositions, there is a chance where he would only know 123, 456 propositions (and hence fail to exist), and the same for every other natural number. Since there are an infinite number of natural numbers, the chances of getting the FNG who knows all propositions is infinitesimal, and thus the chance that the world be other than empty is infinitesimal. If this argument is sound, then the strong version of the FNG is less likely to account for the existence of both the universe and the FNG than the weak version.

There is one more point to consider, logic depends upon God. Geisler states, "Aquinas would agree: (1) that speaking in the realm of being (metaphysics), logic is dependent upon God and not God on logic."⁴² Geisler's meaning is that ontologically, the laws of logic are dependent upon God for their existence. They exist eternally and necessarily in his mind. While this view may have merit if one accepts the existence of the LNG, it has no plausibility at all in the case of the FNG. In this view, the FNG exists for no reason at all. If the laws of logic depend upon God for their existence, then the laws of logic exist for no reason at all. It seems self-evidently wrong to say that the law of identity, for example, just happened to exist and if the empty world had been the one instantiated, that the law of identity would not hold. For then, the empty world would not be identical to itself. But everything is necessarily identical to itself. Further, the idea of the laws of logic existing in only some possible worlds (the ones where the FNG exists) and not others, makes the whole concept of possible worlds incoherent. For what is possible, as with what is necessary and impossible depends upon the laws of logic. What is merely possible is that which is both not contradictory and whose negation is also not contradictory. If logic does not exist in the empty world, and therefore does not apply to it, it is not a 'possible world'. The very concept of 'possible world' is defined in the terms of the laws of logic and cannot be separated from them. The empty world would have no logical standing. The problem arises from the idea of logic depending for its existence on something that exists for no reason. If the laws of logic were truly dependent upon the FNG, then any calculation of the probability of the FNG would be meaningless. The laws of probability depend upon the basic laws of logic. In order for the basic laws of logic to apply to the FNG's chances for existence, they must logically be prior to the FNG. Therefore, the whole concept of the laws of logic being dependent upon the FNG is incoherent.

Additional criticisms of the FNG can quickly be lodged. First, it should be obvious that in terms of explanatory value, the LNG is superior to the FNG. For with the LNG, *everything* is explained, that is, has a reason for its existence. With the FNG on the other hand, everything ultimately exists for no reason at all. Everything in existence depends for its existence upon the FNG, but the FNG exists

without a reason. Thus, there is no reason why things are the way they are.

Second, in all classical theistic theories, God is by definition the ultimate entity, that which is independent of everything else but upon which everything else depends. As we saw in the first chapter, in any philosophical system that which is divine is that which does not depend upon anything else for its existence. The FNG cannot fulfil this definition. The FNG does not exist in all possible worlds; there is at least one world in which it does not exist. A possible world is a world that could have been actual. Therefore, when looking at the model of the FNG, there is at least one world where the FNG does not exist which could have been the actual one, even if it is only the empty world. Since any of the possible worlds could have been actual and instantiated for no reason at all, then what is ultimate when looking at the model of the FNG is potentiality. That is, there exists the potentiality for being in every world that could be, and this potentiality exists independently of anything else, and everything else that exists, including the FNG, depends upon it for its existence. Without this potential for being none of the things that do exist could exist. This potentiality exists independently of God if God is the FNG, for the world(s) where God does not exist have it too. Therefore, when looking at this model of God, God is not the ultimate existent, and this is incompatible with classical theism. What would be divine in this model is some sort of abstract potentiality or possibility. (If this model were true, then there could also be no empty world where nothing existed. Every world would have at least this abstract potentiality existing in it.)

This ends the criticisms about the concept of a factually necessary God. The concept of such a God is both useless as an explanation of why anything exists and is internally incoherent. The basic problem lies in the fact that it attempts to meld two contrary concepts together. On the one hand we have God as an omniscient perfect being, in control of all things. On the other hand, God is also a Brute Fact. As David Schrader states, "Theistic belief ought not to wish to deny that God's existence is a brute fact which is not susceptible to further explanation. Rather it should assert that God's existence is *the* brute fact on which all other facts do and must depend."⁴³ But a brute fact is irrational, necessarily, it exists for no reason and has the properties it has for no reason. Why then should one expect reality to be rational so that all 'facts do and must depend' upon this one brute fact? Why must everything else necessarily depend for their existence upon something that exists, and exists in the manner that it does, for no reason? Brute Fact theism is an attempt to combine rationality and irrationality, order and explanation with pure chance.

Seeing all of the problems with the concept of the FNG, one may wonder why anyone ever endorsed the idea. The main reason is there were serious attacks on the concept of the LNG, and the FNG was put forward as an alternative. In this case the cure is worse than the disease. In any event, the concept of the FNG is not a viable option.

CHAPTER 3

GOD AND LOGICAL NECESSITY

Given the debilitating problems with the factually necessary God, one might wonder why the concept was ever raised. It was developed because philosophers found what they believed were insurmountable problems with the concept of a logically necessary God. Ronald Nash states:

Philosophical theists abandoned the notion of a logically necessary God in such numbers that it became practically impossible to find anyone willing to risk his reputation in defense of the concept. They apparently thought that the objections were so overpowering that the continued advocacy of the doctrine would be detrimental to theism.¹

The concept of necessity is fundamental to classical theism so it was thought that God must be necessary in some sense of the word. Hence, factual necessity. As shown in the previous chapter, the notion of factual necessity when applied to God, leads to serious problems. Therefore, it behooves us to re-examine the concept of the LNG and the strength of the objections to it.

Several objections to the LNG exist and we shall examine them in detail. We begin with the basic objection which was stated by David Hume, "Nothing, that is distinctly conceivable, implies a contradiction. Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no Being, therefore, whose non-existence implies a contradiction."²

To put it succinctly, Hume argues that whatever one can conceive as non-existent, is possibly non-existent. One can conceive God as not existing. Thus, possibly God does not exist, and therefore he cannot be a necessary being. Restated, if God exists in all possible worlds, then it is absolutely impossible that he not exist. It would be impossible for the proposition 'God exists' to be a false statement, just as it is impossible for 'the number 5 is prime' to be a false statement. The inverse of these propositions, that it is necessary for 'God exists' to be a true statement and it is necessary for 'the number 5 to be prime', are on the same level. To deny the

truth of the proposition that 'the number 5 is prime' is to run into a contradiction, as then one would be asserting that 'there is an integer other than one which divides evenly into 5'. Of course this is false for the only numbers which could possibly be considered are 2, 3 and 4, and none of them evenly divides into 5. Given the properties of 2, 3, 4 and 5, to say any one of the first three could evenly divide into the last would be to contradict their essence.

Similarly, if 'God exists' is a necessary truth, then to deny it should cause one to eventually run into a contradiction. However at first view, it doesn't seem to. One can say 'God doesn't exist' without contradicting oneself. Or, as Hume stated, we can distinctly conceive of God as not existing without any problem. In fact, many people firmly believe the proposition 'God does not exist'. So God's non-existence is conceivable and one can deny his existence without contradiction. One cannot do the same with the proposition 'the number 5 is prime'. Therefore, the proposition 'God exists' cannot be a necessary truth.

This is the basic argument given against the notion of the LNG. In an influential essay J.N. Findlay said, "[T]he divine existence is either senseless or impossible. The modern mind feels not the faintest axiomatic force in principles which trace contingent things back to some necessarily existent source. . ."³ Kai Nielsen similarly argues that because one can conceive of something in a certain state, in this case the non-existence of God in some worlds, it is impossible for God to exist as the LNG.⁴ The conceptual capacities of the human mind thus judge what can or cannot exist. Richard Swinburne has made the same argument.⁵

Before we examine whether the human mind has the capacity to fulfill this task, a distinction must be made about what is meant by 'conceivable'. I will argue that there are at least two definitions of the word conceivable. One is the simple intuitive test of imagination, and the other is the conception of something as not having an inherent contradiction.

The difference cited above has immense ramifications. Just because one can conceive something to be so, does not mean it can be so. To quote from Nash once again, "Just because I find a state of affairs conceivable, it does not follow that it is logically possible. I might, for example, find it conceivable that the square root of 60,616 is 244. While it might be conceivable, it turns out to be logically impossible."⁶ Nash then concludes that this argument against the concept of a logically necessary God is 'worthless'. To demonstrate why, I quote Keith Parsons:

To say that a proposition is self-evident is to say that it is seen to be true as soon as it is understood. The basic truths of arithmetic and logic are self-evident in this way. As soon as one comes to understand what the symbols '1', '+', '=', and '2' stand for, one will immediately see that '1 + 1 = 2' is true. Likewise, the sentence 'Nobody is both married and unmarried' is seen to be true as soon as its meaning is understood. Of course, self-evidence has to be relativized to each individual person; as we hinted earlier, $2,196 \times 1,289 = 283,284$ might be self-evident to some mathematical genius.⁷

How self-evident a necessary truth will depend upon how able the person

considering it is and how complex it is to think about the necessary truth. Anyone with an average I.Q. can see that $1 + 1 = 2$, but only a mathematical genius could immediately see that $2,196 \times 129 = 283,284$. There are necessary truths which are much more complicated than this one. In the case of God, God being by definition the GPB, it would be at least as difficult to 'self-evidently see' that such a being could not exist as to see that some complicated mathematical formula was true or false. It's much more difficult to conceive of God in his wholeness than to conceive of anything else. Only God can completely understand himself.

The statement that one can conceive of something as not existing and therefore, cannot necessarily exist, is to give too much credit to the human powers of conception. One can, and often does, conceive of necessary truths as being false. Especially when the subject is complex, or remote from our ordinary experience, or maximal in extent. Under these circumstances the chances of being wrong greatly increase as one's intuitive abilities are being pushed beyond reliable limits. The error here is that of 'psychologism', that is, of thinking that one's powers of imagining are the key to understanding what is and is not logically necessary. However, this confuses two very different things, e.g., necessary truth, and the human powers of conception, which differ from individual to individual.

If one merely defines God as the creator of the universe, it may seem possible to imagine that God is not a necessary being. However, if God is defined as the GPB, the greatest possible being who exists in all worlds, then one must be less confident that such a being is impossible because one can imagine him not existing. It seems possible to conceive of such a being as both existing, and as necessarily existing (though not simultaneously!). What is needed is a more objective standard of conception, those provided by the laws of logic. Based on this line of reasoning, one would conceive of God by defining his attributes and considering whether any of them were incoherent, either in themselves or in relation to some other attribute(s) or his total being. That way, if one can posit the notion of God and see no incoherence, then one can conceive the necessary being as existing. On the other hand, if one cannot conceive of God, that is, think of him with all his attributes without generating a contradiction, then one would have an objective ground for thinking that no such necessary being exists.

The next objection is more difficult to dispose of. On this Nash states, "The second objection is much more difficult to treat briefly because (in part) the dispute between those who contend that necessity is a feature of certain uses of language and those who insist that necessity is also a feature of reality is one of the dividing lines between rationalism and empiricism."⁸

We will take the strongest objections to the concept that necessity is inherent in reality, and then show that they are not conclusive, at least not in the area of the concept of God. J.J.C. Smart put fourth the objection thusly:

No existential proposition can be logically necessary, for we saw that the truth of a logically necessary proposition depends only upon our symbolism, or to put the same thing in another way, on the relationship of concepts. We saw, however, in discussing

the ontological argument, that an existential proposition does not say that one concept is involved in another, but that a concept applies to something. An existential proposition must be very different from any logically necessary one, such as a mathematical one, for example, for the conventions of our symbolism clearly leave it open for us either to affirm or deny an existential proposition; it is not our symbolism but reality which decides whether or not we must affirm it or deny it.⁹

This is the classic statement of denial, however there are more current re-statements of it. Writing on this matter, Bruce Reichenbach maintains, "The opposite of a necessary proposition must be of the form A is *non-A*. If its opposite is of this form, then a necessary proposition must be of the form A is A . That is, a logically necessary proposition must be a tautology. But if they are tautologous, they are completely uninformative."¹⁰ A quote from John Morreal makes this point as well as any other. He states,

Existence is not a property which can belong or fail to belong to the essence of anything. . . . The second difficulty with appealing to the analyticity of "God exists", in claims that God is self-explanatory, has not been given so much attention. . . . If a certain property p is part of the very meaning of the term ' X ', then of course anything that we would call X would have to have p But the fact that X 's must have p is only a fact about our use of the word ' X ', and perhaps indirectly is an indication of the properties that for together in our experience-it is not a guarantee that any particular thing has to have p , nor is it an explanation for any particular thing's having p Similarly, even if we allow someone to treat existence as an essential property of God, this would not give him what he would need to claim that God is self-explanatory. For if existence is part of what we mean when we say 'God', part of the essence of God, this only means that in order to be counted as God, a thing would have to have this property of existence.¹¹

The point of these quotations is that a logically necessary being is impossible due to the definition of necessity. For these philosophers, as well as many others, necessity is about the way one uses words and concepts, not about external reality. They maintain there are no affirmative existential propositions which are logically necessary. We shall examine Smart's argument first.

Smart believes that necessity is only related to symbolism, or, in other words, about concepts. Logically necessary propositions tell us about the relationship between concepts, for example that every triangle has three sides. Existential propositions tell us that a concept applies to something in external reality, not about our concepts. Therefore, he holds, no thing can have logically necessary existence. There are a number of issues at stake here, and they must be untangled before Smart's argument can be evaluated. The first is the relationship of our symbolism to concepts, the second is the relationship of concepts to the external world and finally the relationship of concepts to existence.

Proponents of the view that necessity only lies in propositions sometimes speak of necessity being in our symbols, or our determination to use certain symbols in a

certain way. However, necessity cannot lie in symbolism only. Symbols refer to concepts. While it is true that specific symbols apply to certain concepts (as = refers to equality instead of subtraction), this does not entail that concepts or their relationships are arbitrary. Symbols often refer to concepts that are themselves necessary. The position defended here is *essentialism*, that objects have properties which are essential to them. Michael Dummett makes the following observation:

The platonist metaphor assimilates mathematical enquiry to the investigations of the astronomer: mathematical structures, like galaxies, exist, independently of us, in a realm of reality which we do not inhabit but which those of us who have the skill are capable of observing and reporting on. The constructivist metaphor assimilates mathematical activity to that of the artificer fashioning objects in accordance with the creative power of his imagination.¹²

Even if one has a constructivist or some other anti-realist view towards mathematical entities and other abstract objects, it is still true that most of the concepts generated seem to be necessary. For example, even if numbers were created like an 'artificer fashioning objects in accordance with his imagination', the numbers fashioned would remain necessarily the same. One would still have the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. no matter who was doing the fashioning. Natural numbers, all of which have necessary relations to each other, are discovered rather than invented. Similarly, a cube, a die shaped object with 6 faces, formed with 8 corners and all right angles, will always also have 12 edges. One cannot make a cube which has all its other properties intact and has 137 edges. Whatever the ontological status of abstract objects, they and their relations seem to be necessary. While literally speaking, our symbolism is arbitrary, that which our symbols represent is anything but arbitrary.¹³

Concepts which seem necessary, seem also to necessarily apply to the external world. Just the fact that the concept of a cube exists, does not mean any cubes will actually exist. But as cubes exist as a concept, so must they exist in reality. One not only thinks of a cube as necessarily having 12 edges, but if one tries to construct one, then it too will necessarily have 12 edges. Concepts do not only apply to other concepts, they apply to extra-mental reality as well. If this is the case, then there are aspects of external reality which are necessarily the way they are. This has ramifications to the question of whether there are logically necessary affirmative existential statements. First, the question of what is meant by 'affirmative existential statements that are logically necessary' must be raised. If the meaning is that there are affirmative statements about external reality that are logically necessary, e.g., if a cube exists then it has six side, then we have seen these do indeed exist. If the term is interpreted in the narrower sense of whether there are any beings which exist in every possible world, then this cannot be denied only on the basis of some theory of meaning. For, if there is a sound argument(s) that a logically necessary being exists, then the theory of meaning which denies their possibility is shown to be wrong.

Smart's most important point is that existential concepts are not about one concept being involved in another, but about whether a concept applies to an object. Although there is truth in this, it does not prove that all necessary truths apply to concepts, and concepts alone. Ordinarily it is true that some sort of an empirical investigation is conducted when considering the existence of some object. The concepts involved are not taken into consideration. As pointed out above, any existing cubes will have 12 edges, but this does not mean that necessarily, cubes will exist. The reason for this is most objects are logically contingent; no one expects them to necessarily exist. Indeed, one might say that logical contingency is a concept which applies necessarily to most objects, and therefore, necessarily, one cannot expect to ascertain their existence through logical analysis.

But why assume this is true of all objects? The defender of the existence of the LNG will cheerfully admit that virtually all concrete objects are logically contingent. However, in addition he believes there is at least one, and perhaps only one, object that is not logically contingent. Smart does not explicitly make this argument, but it is implicit in what he says.¹⁴ He gives what may be termed something of an inductive argument, citing various existential facts. By showing that these facts are contingent, he concludes that all matters of fact are contingent. In some cases an inductive argument may have a great deal of force, but it is subject to various problems. If one sees a million crows and they are all black, this gives one reason to believe that all crows are black. This however is not proof, as finding one albino crow will destroy the argument. God, by definition is a unique being with unique properties. One can see that the properties of the objects of our everyday experience, or even the objects which exist within the universe, may be very different than his. One cannot say all the finite beings we see around us have *F*, and then automatically conclude that God has *F*. This argument, is, as I said, not explicitly made, but it may be one basis for the theory of meaning whereby all affirmative existential propositions are held to be logically contingent.

In examining Reichenbach's argument we find the foundation of his objection to logically necessary existence is simply that all necessary propositions must be tautologies. This is simply false. As was discussed in chapter one, not all necessary propositions are tautologous; some are analytic, some metaphysical and some necessary a priori. Recalling the cube example, it is not a tautology that a cube have 12 edges, rather it is analytic.

When examining Morreal's position we find the assertion that existence cannot be part of the essence of anything. Morreal's main argument is roughly as follows. If one says that some property *p* is a necessary part of the term *X*, all this does is to reflect how, because of our "experiences, purposes, and traditions, we shall not count anything as an *X* unless it has *p*."¹⁵ This argument is similar to Smart's and therefore has similar objections. The basis of 'cubeness' is reality, not one's experiences, purposes, and traditions.

If one had a different purpose or tradition, could one say that cubes, regular physical objects with 6 faces and 8 corners with all right angles, sometimes had 137 edges? Or that one might someday experience such an object? If one does, one is

not just being confused in experience, purpose or tradition; one is breaking the law of contradiction. In any case, Morreal is assuming as truth his own theory that it is the human mind, and not objective reality, that is determinate of definition. This must be rejected. Some necessary truth exists externally to our own purposes.

Morreal then moves to the question of God's self-explanatoriness. He asks why, even if we allow some property to be part of the essence of some thing, does that "particular thing have this particular essence"?¹⁶ The answer to this is simply, because it is the kind of thing that it is. A woman has the essence of being a person because she is a person. That is the kind of being she is. Further, it seems obvious that certain kinds of things have necessary properties. For example, it seems obviously true that blue is more like green than it is red or orange. It could not become more like orange than green without ceasing to be blue. This seems to be an *E-property* of blue (and green and orange); a synthetic necessary truth. A conventionalist might argue that the fact that blue is necessarily more like green than orange is merely reflective of our determination to use these words in a certain way. One, he might say, would not call anything blue unless it was more like green than orange. Whatever one calls these colors, or whatever one allowed to count as blue, green or orange, it is still necessarily true that the color which we now call blue is necessarily more like what we now call green than what we now call orange. These relations would hold no matter what one decided to call these colors. The color, which we call blue, is necessarily, by virtue of its nature, closer to green than orange or red, by virtue of their natures. This is necessarily so, because to be different, the nature of the colors themselves would have to be different, in which case they would not be the same colors. One calls these colors by their names because one recognizes their nature. These facts are part of the nature of these colors, part of their concept or being, and is independent of one's determination to name things in a certain way. It is true regardless of what one decides to call blue or orange or green.

Similarly, in respect to God, one could answer the question of why God necessarily exists by saying that is part of the definition or concept of what he is. Granted, God's necessity would be analytic rather than synthetic. The relevancy is that there is necessity in the things themselves, and not merely one's determination to call them something. If one states that only propositions whose opposites entail a logical contradiction can be necessary, and the proposition 'God does not exist' does not do this, then the response to the Hume argument which was outlined above can be made.

Finally, Morreal is correct in asserting that just stating God has existence essential to his nature does not tell us why he exists, but this does not mean there is no reason. The reason is, as we shall see in chapter four, if God is the greatest possible being, then necessary existence is analytic to his nature, and this is the reason why God exists and why his existence is self-explanatory.

Thus, the arguments made in this section fail. At the least, the authors cited above have not shown that there is no necessity in reality apart from our concepts and definitions. It is not enough to say that the only necessity is in propositions, and

therefore there cannot be any logically necessary beings. As previously pointed out, this theory is debatable, and even if true, does not by itself rule out a priori that the proposition 'God exists' is necessarily true. The only way one could be certain that there could not be logically necessary beings is if one knew there was a contradiction in the very concept of such beings. Just stipulating that there can't be any isn't enough; what needs to be shown is the contradiction. Since there are real necessities in nature, one should not rule out a priori that there are logically necessary beings. If one kind of necessity exists in reality, so may another. Robert Adams writes:

The claim that there is no way in which an affirmative existential proposition could be logically necessary might be to some extent confirmed by the refutation of arguments for the logically necessary existence of one entity or another. But it is by its very nature a claim that is always liable to refutation by a new argument for logically necessary existence. It would therefore be question-begging to treat that claim as providing a refutation of any argument for logically necessary existence.¹⁷

Kant in attempting to refute the ontological argument, asserted that existence does not 'add' anything to a concept, and therefore existence is not a real predicate (it is certainly a grammatical one) and does not tell us anything about the object at issue. Kant wrote:

Being is obviously not a real predicate, that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. . . . The small word 'is' adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate *in its relation* to the subject. If, now, we take the subject (God) with all its predicates (among which is omnipotence), and say 'God is', or 'There is a God', we attach no new predicate to the concept of God, but only posit it as an object that stands in relation to my concept. The content of both must be one and the same; nothing can have been added to the concept, which expresses merely what is possible, by my thinking its object (through the expression 'it is') as given absolutely. Otherwise stated, the real contains no more than the merely possible. A hundred real thalers do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers. For as the latter signify the concept, and the former the object and the positing of the object, and would not therefore be an adequate concept of it. My financial position is, however, affected very differently by a hundred real thalers than it is by the mere concept of them (that is, of their possibility). For the object, as it actually exists, is not analytically contained in my concept, but is added to my concept. . . synthetically; and yet the conceived hundred thalers are not in the least increased through thus acquiring existence outside my concept.¹⁸

Antony Flew makes a similar point. "[T]o borrow, G.E. Moore's now famous example, with other grammatically appropriate terms you can significantly if not truly say that some tame tigers do it and some do not. But it makes no sense at all to say that some tame tigers exist and some do not."¹⁹

Moore's example of the tame tigers has been quite popular, and was also used by J.C.C. Smart. He states, "[T]he sentence 'some tame tigers do not exist' has no

clear meaning. . . . The verb 'to exist' here takes us out of the purely conceptual world. This being so, there can never be any *logical contradiction* in denying that God exists."²⁰ Terrence Penulhum, on the other hand moves from tigers to a color. He writes:

If someone came in unannounced and said, 'Its blue!' we should not have much idea what he was talking about, but we would automatically know it was a visible physical object and not a philosophical theory or an Act of Parliament. But if he had come in and said "it exists!" we should know *nothing* of what sort of thing that it was. Existence cannot vary in quantity or intensity, belong to some members of a class and not others, to be interrupted and then resumed. . . . From all this it follows that existence cannot be held to be a quality which a perfect being would have to have, since it is not a quality at all. So it further follows that no existential assertion *can* be analytic.²¹

Perhaps the most detailed and impressive work defending the notion that existence is not a real predicate is by C.J.F. Williams.²² Williams denies that existence can ever be what is called a 'first-level predicate.' It is untrue that existence can serve as a predicate for singular affirmative terms, or entities with proper names. For example he writes, "The way I dealt with the simplest case was peremptory. 'Aristides exists' was dismissed as an ill-formed string of words, it just is not a proposition."²³ Further, he states, "Put in these terms, what I am claiming is that the result of embedding a proper name in '_____ exists' is, in general, a meaningless string of words."²⁴ To give a final example, Williams uses the ever popular concept of the tame tiger. "Most tame tigers exist" and "Some tame tigers do not exist" are clearly ill-formed expressions. This does not result from anything special about the concept *tame tiger*. Rather it is due to the fact that attaching 'exist' to expressions of the form 'Most A's _____' or 'Some A's do not _____' produces ill-formed formulae.²⁵ Williams embraces the idea that such expressions are, strictly speaking, meaningless.

Before attempting a thorough analysis of the above position, I shall define a number of the terms involved. First, what exactly is a predicate? According to Peter Angeles, a predicate is "To assert or affirm something about something else. . . that which is affirmed or denied of a subject. Example: Grass is green. Snow is not green. Green is the predicate affirmed of (is predicated of) grass and denied of snow."²⁶ Besides the notion of predicate, however, Williams introduces the notion of predicable. He writes "A first level-predicable is an expression, which, when attached to one or more occurrences of one or more proper names, yields a proposition."²⁷ On the other hand, "A second-level predicable is an expression which, when attached to one or more occurrences of one or more first-level predicables, yields a proposition."²⁸ It is Williams' contention that 'exists' can never function as first-level predicate.

Admittedly, if exists is a real or first-level predicate, it is a strange one. For example, if one states 'Aristides exists', one is saying that Aristides, who actually exists, exists. As all entities exist, an inherent problem with this is that one cannot

speak of non-existing entities. Therefore, if one states Aristides exists, one is merely stating a tautology, or at best being redundant. For necessarily, if Aristides is an individual of whom one can speak, then he exists. Williams argues that predicates which stand for everything really stand for nothing. He notes this is not always the case. For example, many say that everything is self-identical, this is favored by logicians. Other expressions, such as "either square or not square",²⁹ seem to be true of everything. Williams thinks statements like these are essentially compound, and statements which make assertions that something exists are essentially a simple.

Williams, following Frege, argues that existence statements are really statements about numbers or counting. In this sense to say there are no just men, is to say "the number of just men is 0."³⁰ Similarly, to affirm that something exists, is simply a denial of the number 0. Williams further argues that statements like 'Aristocratic Australians exist' is absurd. He writes:

A.

(3.1) Aristocratic Australians are numerous.

(3.2) Aristides is an aristocratic Australian

(3.3) *Ergo* Aristides is numerous. . . .

B.

(3.4) Aristocratic Australians exist.

(3.5) Aristides is an aristocratic Australian.

(3.6) *Ergo* Aristides exists.³¹

A is obviously absurd, and B, although not as obvious, is absurd for the same reasons. These statements are attempting to pass off second-level predicates as first-level predicates. In an attempt to explain what he regards as the cause for the illusion that statements of the form '____ exist', Williams writes, "Frege reminded us that affirmation of the existence is nothing but denial of the number nought. If we regard this as establishing that '____ exist' is a predicable of the same level as '____ are numerous', we must explain why we have the illusion that '____ exist' can function as a first-level predicate."³² In answer to this Williams states, "There must be something if 'Aristides' is to be a proper name, but that does not entitle us to say that Aristides *is*. The illusion that 'Aristides exists' has significance comes, perhaps, from the mistaken feeling that it does so entitle us."³³ For Williams, "'Aristides exists' was dismissed as an ill-formed string of words: it just is not a proposition."³⁴

When putting this altogether, one can see there is a strong case which can be made against existence serving as a first level predicate. Starting with the theories of Kant and Frege, many modern philosophers affirm that it is illusory for existence

to be a real predicate or property of things. Yet, it seems in spite of the apparent strength in the belief that existence is not a predicate, there are weaknesses here, both in Kant's and latter philosophers theories. I will now offer an argument which shows that perhaps in some cases, 'exists' can function as a first-order predicate.

Flew, Smart and Williams use the illustration made by G.E. Moore, that it makes no sense to say 'Some tame tigers do not exist'. It makes perfect sense, on the other hand to say 'Some tame tigers do not growl'. There is an important difference between these two statements. Similarly, it seems to make sense to say, in the absence of any particular referent, that 'It's blue!' However, it does not make sense to say, in the absence of any particular referent, that 'It exists!' Does the difference lie in existence not being a predicate?

Many philosophers, including those mentioned above, have come to the same conclusion. For them existence is often not a first-order predicate; it is Russell's existential quantifier which means 'there is'. My position is that existence has several different meanings, and at least one of them sometimes functions as a first-order predicate. One meaning we'll call *pan-existence*, or *P-existence*. In this existence everything exists. As Gordon Clark makes clear,³⁵ in some sense, everything exists, by virtue of the simple fact that all things are things. Dreams exist, thoughts exist, hallucinations exist, abstractions exist, as well as things like chairs, frogs and tenured professors. Possible worlds also exist in this sense, along with the objects in them. They exist because they could have been and a mind can conceive them. Everything at least exists in the sense that it can possibly be conceived. Whether any of these things have *P-existence* apart from being thought of, is something we need not go into here. Therefore, everything has *P-existence* which is something that everything possesses, just as everything is self-identical. In this sense of the word, existence is not a predicate, or at least not a first level predicate. It applies to everything without exception, and since it applies to everything it cannot differentiate between any separate things. If for example, everything were necessarily white³⁶ then 'being white' would not be something which could be used to distinguish between anything. The only predicates which are useful, that are real or first-level predicates, are concepts which can be fixed to some entity and used to distinguish it from other entities. This is why growling or being blue are real predicates. Not everything that exists growls or is blue, and therefore these predicates can distinguish between objects. By this definition existence is not a predicate, because existing is true of everything. This is also true for other reasons as David Braine makes clear.³⁷

There are additional meanings to the word 'exist'. Actually there is a whole family of definitions to the word 'exists'. One of them is that of being instantiated in the actual world and of being extra-mental, that is, existing outside of any finite mind. In this definition, things which exist are things that are real. Let us call this *actual* or *A-existence*. To have *A-existence* a thing must act, be caused, be acted on, or exist in space and time in the actual world, etc. Bearing this in mind, the Taj Mahal exists, but Pegasus the winged horse does not. Williams argues, persuasively in my opinion, that fictional existence is really a kind of game, a sort of 'let's

pretend'.³⁸ Therefore, Pegasus does not have existence, if what one means by existence is *A-existence*. But even though Pegasus does not exist (in terms of having *A-existence*), the thought or concept of Pegasus does exist in some sense. One can think about Pegasus, discuss Pegasus and his nature with others, and even firmly, though mistakenly, become convinced Pegasus exists, that is, have *A-existence*. Therefore, the concept of Pegasus has *P-existence*, which means one can coherently think of the concept of Pegasus.

One can define necessary or *N-existence* as a special kind of *A-existence*. A being has necessary existence if it exists in all possible worlds. Of course, the existence of necessary being is controversial. But if God as classically defined exists, then he has *N-existence*. By no means do I think these three definitions are the only kinds of existence there are,³⁹ but they should suit our present purposes. Let us formally define these terms.

(3.7) (x) , x has *A-existence* if and only if x exists extra-mentally in the actual world.

(3.8) (x) , x has *P-existence* if and only if x exists in any way.

(3.9) (x) , x has *N-existence* if and only if x exists in every possible world.

It should be noted that (3.8), *P-existence* has the maximal definition of existence; it is all inclusive. Literally everything has *P-existence*. This being the case, *P-existence* is a rather useless term, and as noted above, cannot function as a real predicate. Even though Kant and other philosophers were right about *P-existence*, it does not automatically mean that the same criticism is correct about *A-existence* or other kinds of existence. One problem which comes into play here is that in ordinary language, or even in philosophical discussion, one does not ordinarily distinguish between *P-existence* and *A-existence*. In ordinary speech and writing, the definition of 'existence' must be left to context and interpretation. The fact that there is more than one meaning to the word also leads to confusion, as was seen in the arguments about existence not being a predicate. Therefore, it seems that *P-existence* is not a predicate, while *A-existence* and *N-existence* may be able to function as such.

One of the points raised by Smart and others against existence being a predicate can now be answered. It is easy to think of a story where the term 'Some tame tigers exist' is quite meaningful. Imagine a conversation between Smith and Jones. Smith is relating to Jones several tales of fiction, wherein various characters have tame tigers. Jones then sadly reflects that it is too bad that there are no real tame tigers. In other words, all tame tigers have only *P-existence*. Whereupon Smith replies 'Some tame tigers exist!' Meaning that some tame tigers really exist, or some tame tigers have *A-existence*. This is a meaningful statement, and one where 'exists' functions as a predicate. This is because by saying 'some tame tigers exist,' one is saying there are tame tigers which exist extra-mentally in the actual world, and are not just concepts. The statement thus distinguishes between different kinds

of existence and may be able to serve as a predicate.

Next, let us examine the example given by Penelhum: a man is being pictured as running into a room shouting 'It exists!'. Penelhum claims that in this case one has no idea what the man was shouting about. This is certainly true if what he has in mind is *P-existence*. As we saw, everything has *P-existence* and therefore saying 'something has *P-existence*' does not tell one anything. However, if the sense of 'exists' is *A-existence*, then what the man shouted does tell us something and has meaning. It tells us something has *A-existence*, and the man who was shouting proved this fact. If this unusual situation happened this would probably be the meaning of 'It exists!'. Thus, contrary to Penelhum, the example tells us there is something which exists extra-mentally in the actual world which the man in question is shouting about, such as some newly discovered sub-atomic particle. The major problem with the definition of existence is, as was said, that it is often difficult to distinguish in ordinary speech or even philosophical writing, which sense of existence is meant. This makes it difficult to say whether existence is being used as a predicate or not. The crucial point here is one can make such a distinction, and thus existence can function as a real predicate.

When looking at the example given by Williams about Aristocratic Australians and Aristides existing, one sees a similar situation. The main difference is in the statement Aristides is numerous. This is obviously an absurd statement because it is contradictory. To say that Aristides, an individual, is numerous, is to say one individual person is many persons. On the other hand, to say Aristides exists is not absurd, for Aristides may exist extra-mentally in the actual world, unlike Pegasus, who only 'exists' as a concept. A distinction is being drawn between two different kinds of existence; the statement 'Aristides exists' can be informative and meaningful.

Finally, we come to the selection by Kant. In the first part of the quotation cited above, Kant makes the observation that Being is not a real predicate because it does not add anything to the concept of a thing. Rather, he states, it is the mere positing of a thing. Kant seems to be speaking about the concept of *A-existence*; when one says something exists, what one is really saying is that it exists extra-mentally in the actual world. There is a point to this Kantian criticism; existence is an odd sort of concept. To say something is green is different than saying something exists, or in this context, has *A-existence*. But because something is different from 'normal' predicates does not automatically mean that it is not a predicate at all. Again, contrary to Kant, to say something has *A-existence* does tell one something. It tells one the thing in question exists in the real world, external to our minds, and therefore distinguishes that thing from something which only has *P-existence*. A hundred real Thalers may not, in one sense, contain the least coin more than a hundred possible Thalers. What is being considered at this point is a property which is being abstracted from the rest of the objects being considered, that of 'a hundred Thaleriness'. Similarly, if one is considering the color of a real green apple with a possible green apple, one has to say the color is the same. As the real green apple and the potential green apple have *P-existence*, it is possible to compare the

features of both. This also applies to the hundred real and potential Thalers. Since one is abstracting one property of each, and looking at only that one property, it is no wonder that *A-existence* does not come into the picture. The objects and properties are being compared only at the level of *P-existence*, as objects of contemplation.

None of this answers the question of whether existence, in any of its senses, is, or can be a predicate. When the question is turned to that of *A-existence*, the picture changes. Here, it is true that to say that a hundred Thalers has real or *A-existence* and does give one a hundred Thalers more than a merely potential hundred Thalers, which only has *P-existence*. The greenness of a real apple exists in a much different way than the greenness of a merely potential apple. It exists actually, rather than conceptually.

The basic point being argued here is between actual existence, existence extra-mentally, and conceptual existence, the existence of a concept. Even though there is a large difference between the two, the type of existence something has can be frequently confused. For example, one could be convinced that Pegasus actually existed, or that Bill Clinton is merely fictional. Due to this, the word 'exists' is sometimes used to show that a certain concept also has extra-mental existence in the actual world. It is believed for this reason that the term, 'exists' can tell one something about the object and the world, and thus can be a real predicate or property of things.⁴⁰

Although 'exists' can function as a predicate, it does not automatically mean it can function as a first-level predicate. As was stated above, a first-level predicate is a predicate, that when attached to a one or more occurrences of proper name, yields a proposition. A second-level predicate is a predicate, that when attached to one or more occurrences of a first-level predicable, yields a proposition. Here one finds a distinction between what can be predicated of kinds and of individuals. 'Exists', in the sense of *A-existence*, when predicated of a kind often yields a second-level predicate, while when attached to individuals, yields a first-level predicate. When one says, for example, planets exist, what is meant is that there are members to a set of planets, and thus one is referring to the property of being a planet. This is a second-level predicate, as it is attached to a first-level predicable, that of being a planet. On the other hand, if one says the planet Mars exists, one is using existence as a first-level predicate. One is saying an individual, the planet Mars, has *A-existence*. Thus, there is a distinction between the kind and the individual, which would seem to say when one is speaking of a plurality of entities, then one is speaking of a second-level predicate. However, one must be careful for this can be misleading, as sometimes when one is speaking of a kind, what one is really speaking of is the individuals who make up the group.

Barry Miller illustrates this point by making the following distinction. Comparing the two following statements Miller writes:

(3.10) 'Elephants exist, but mermaids do not'.

(3.11) 'Elephants exist, but dinosaurs do not'.

"In (3.10), '_____ exists' is being said of the property of being an elephant, not about individual elephants, whereas in (3.11), it is being said of individual elephants, not about the property of being an elephant."⁴¹ He goes on to say, "So, in (3.11), 'Elephants exist' is a general existential proposition that is about individuals, as contrasted with the same clause in (3.10), which is not about individual elephants but merely about the property of being an elephant."⁴² In conclusion, 'exists', can and sometimes does function as a first-level predicate, when it asserts the actual existence of individual entities. Thus, in the example of planets given above, if one said 'planets exist' one could be saying that the class of planets have members, or one *could* be saying individual planets exist, that is, there are individual planets which have *A-existence*. This is of course in addition to the proposition 'Mars exists' which contains a first level predicate, as it asserts the *A-existence* of one individual thing, the planet Mars.

That existence can be a predicate is highly controversial and many will reject it. However, if one decides existence is not a first-level predicate, this does not automatically mean it is impossible for there to be any logically necessary being(s). There is still the concept of necessary existence, or *N-existence* to be considered. This point has been made by Norman Malcolm, Charles Hartshorne and Peter Van Inwagen.⁴³ Even if it were true that 'ordinary' existence-whatever that is-does not add anything to the concept of something, it is nevertheless true that *N-existence does*. Normally to say that something exists just tells one to posit it as an object. However, this is not the only thing that *N-existence* does. *N-existence* 'adds' something to a concept; it tells one that a things essence is exemplified in every possible world and it could not possibly be destroyed. Necessary existence is analytic to the notion of the GPB. Even if 'God exists', a meaningless statement, is contrary to what was argued above, that 'God exists necessarily' is a meaningful statement and this is enough to satisfy the requirements.

Another argument against the possibility of a logically necessary being is made by Jonathan Bennett. Bennett actually makes two arguments, both of which are directed against the concept of *N-existence*. I shall look at his arguments in order. Bennett's first argument is as follows:

If something is necessarily *F*, it must be *F* by definition-the term standing for *F* must occur in its definiens. This implies that an object cannot be, in itself, necessarily *F*; because that would require that a certain expression occur in the object's definition, and objects don't have definitions. Cannibals are necessarily carnivores, but we cannot say of any cannibal that *he* is necessarily carnivorous-only that *qua* cannibal he is necessarily carnivorous. . . . From this point of Locke's and Kant's, it follows that nothing of the form 'necessarily *F*' belongs in a definiens. A definiens sets a test that an object must pass if the definiendum is to fit, but for no value of *F* could we test an object to discover whether *it* was necessarily *F*. If an object is *F*, then there will be some *G*, and *H* such that *qua G* the object is necessarily *F* whereas *qua H* it is only contingently *F*.⁴⁴

Bennett assumes a conventionalist or empiricist criterion for necessity. If the arguments I gave in the first chapter are correct, then this criterion is false. It simply is not true that if something is necessarily *F* that it be part of that thing's definiens. For example, it is necessarily true of blue that it is in some sense more like green than orange, yet this fact need not be part of the color blue's very definition. A property may be essential to an object, yet need not be part of that object's definition.

This argument is similar to the one made by Morreal. Bennnett argues there are De Dicto but not De Re necessities. In this argument there is some individual *C*, who has *F* (in this context a carnivore) and is under some description *G* a cannibal. Being *F* is analytic to being a *G*, so as a *G*, *C* is necessarily *F*. However, there is another description of *C*, *H* (being a human being), under which *C* is not necessarily *F* because being *F* is not analytic to *H*.

However, there do seem to be counter-examples. Bennett argues that although it may be true all cannibals are necessarily carnivorous, it is also true that any particular cannibal is not necessarily carnivorous. Even if he is carnivorous, it still could have been true that he was a vegetarian. The human being who is the cannibal is not necessarily one; the property of being a cannibal is not analytic to human beings. This however, is not always true. For example, it does seem to be true that all individuals who are cannibals, are so contingently. It also seems to be true that all individuals who are cannibals are necessarily persons (under the standard definition of cannibals). Being a person is analytic to the concept of cannibal. Therefore, if there is an individual *C* (the cannibal) and a value *P* (in this case being a person) such that *C* is necessarily *P*, *C* could not exist under any description without being *P*, that is, there is no description under which *C* is not *P*.

One might consider that if there is an individual *C*, who is a cannibal, then necessarily *C* is a kind of thing that is possibly carnivorous, or is possibly *F*. If that seems too restrictive, (for it might be argued there are worlds where it is impossible for a human being to be a cannibal), then one can still say that necessarily, there are worlds *W1*, *W2*, *W3*, . . . *WN*, where *C* exists and is necessarily possibly an *F*, and that the actual world is one of them. In this situation which description is being used is irrelevant, for it is an *E-property* of *C* that in some worlds he is possibly an *F*. Being an *E-property*, it is part of his essence, and is therefore a necessary truth about *C*. It is necessary that *C* possibly be *F* in some worlds.⁴⁵ This discovery might even be empirical. Suppose one was convinced that human beings cannot be cannibals, but then discovered that Smith had devoured Jones. One would then know, among other things, that Smith was the kind of thing, that necessarily, had the possibility of being a cannibal. This is not an empty truth to gain as there are many kinds of things that cannot be cannibals. Bricks for example cannot be cannibals, at least not the kind of bricks which exist in the actual world.

There are other examples within this line of reasoning. A table might not necessarily be used to put food on, it is only contingently a kitchen table. But necessarily, any table is material under every description; there are no 'spiritual' tables. Again, it could be argued that all water is necessarily H_2O . A bucket of

water cannot exist somewhere that is XYZ instead of H_2O . It can be part of the definiens of water that it be H_2O . So it appears that there can be definiens of objects which are necessary truths, that there are *F*'s such that 'necessarily *F*' can properly occur in the definiens.⁴⁶

Bennett and others might respond to this by saying, although it is true that cubes, for instance, necessarily have 12 edges, the matter out of which the cube is made is not necessarily formed into the shape of a cube. It might, for example, be formed into the shape of a sphere. Similarly they may say, that all water is necessarily H_2O , but the electrons, protons, etc. out of which the water is composed are not necessarily formed into water. These same subatomic particles might be part of other atoms, carbon for example. While it may be true that to be a cannibal is to be a person, it is also true that the matter that makes up the cannibal's body need not be part of the human body. Therefore, even though it is true that the object itself is necessarily *F*, it is only contingently true the matter or 'stuff' of which the object is composed is *F*.

This objection, although true, is irrelevant, for I am speaking of the objects themselves and not the matter of which they are composed. An undifferentiated object does not have definition, but all objects are necessarily something--and as such have definiens and therefore have necessity in it. Water is necessarily H_2O De Re, even if the matter of which water is composed --electrons, protons, etc., are only so De Dicto. As explained in chapter one, meaning is ambiguous between definition and essential properties. An object can have different definitions and still be the same object. But whatever the definition, the essential properties will be the same.

It is difficult to see the relevance of all this to the question of God. By the classical definition of God, he is not composed of some matter or something else, in other words matter is not part of God but part of something else. For example, it is not the case that God's knowledge of Smith's birthday is in some world not 'part' of God but is 'part' of Jones. All of the attributes God possesses, in the classical definition, are also necessarily 'part' of him. He not only has his existence necessarily, but has *N-properties*, properties which he necessarily possesses. This is part of the what has been traditionally called God's simplicity; he is not composed into separable parts. The doctrine that God is uncomposed, that he is not 'made' of anything else, is necessarily true. And if this is true, then the objection fails.

In addition, Bennett might argue that there is no clear meaning to necessary existence. He argues⁴⁷ that the only meaning which can be given to necessary existence is that a necessary being has existence as part of its definition. Since he does not think that existence is a legitimate predicate, it cannot therefore be part of something's definition. Bennett states, "This is the core of my second argument against Malcolm: in claiming that God is necessarily existent he is 'introducing the concept of existence', in disguise, 'into the concept of a thing'".⁴⁸ The answer to this is that existence is, in some senses, a predicate, and therefore can be part of an object's definition. To clarify the definition of a necessary being one may utilize

possible world semantics. A necessary being is a being that exists in all possible worlds. Why can't this be part of an object's definition?

Kai Nielsen is the next philosopher whose objections to the concept of the necessary being must be investigated. Nielsen's argument is somewhat convoluted, but essentially what he is attempting to do is impale the defender of the logically necessary existence of God on the horns of a dilemma.⁴⁹ The first horn is a restatement of the Hume's argument which has already been covered, but to which Nielsen adds a verificationist twist. The second horn is an attack on the possibility of non-analytic necessity. We shall look at the critique of God having analytic necessity first. To quote Nielsen:

We do not know what can count as 'a self-existent being' or a 'being whose non-existence is inconceivable', for these terms have no established meaning in our language. Moreover, the reason we do not have understand them and the reason why they do not have an established use is that we do not understand how 'self-existent' or 'logically impossible not to exist', could characterize being. . . . Since it is always logically possible to conceive of the non-existence of any being whatsoever, we find the notion of a self-existent being--a being whose non-existence is inconceivable--to be an inconsistent claim.⁵⁰

Several things can be said in response to this. First, Nielsen admits his position is based upon Hume's argument which states since we can conceive of the non-existence of something, including God, there cannot be a logically necessary being. We have already examined this argument and found it wanting. Second, there are Nielsen's assertions that we do not know the meaning of phrases like 'self-existent being', that these phrases have no established use in our language. Perhaps Nielsen does not understand them, but they seem clear to many. A 'self-existent' or a 'logically necessary being', is a being that exists in all possible worlds and does not depend upon anything else for its existence.⁵¹ Contrary to Nielsen, these terms do in fact have an established use in our language. Theologians and theologically minded philosophers have been using these terms for many centuries.

Finally, Nielsen never shows the incoherence of the concept of a 'self-existent being'. For example, round squares cannot exist because part of the full description of round is a geometrical figure with no corners, while part of the description of square is a geometrical figure with four corners. This is a real contradiction and therefore round squares cannot exist. When dealing with the concept of a logically necessary being, there is no argument which states that such a being is simultaneously omnipotent and non-omnipotent.⁵² The closest Nielsen can come to this is to say the logically necessary being must be necessary, while necessarily all being is contingent. This would indeed be a contradiction, however the entire statement depends upon the truth of the second premise, that all being is contingent. The main source of support for this contention is that, to many philosophers all being must be contingent.

Considering all of the above, we discover that Nielsen's argument is invalid. It

may, however be worthwhile to consider the strength of his other attack on the concept of non-analytic necessity. It is interesting to note that some of those who defend the logical necessity of God's existence, in actuality are defending a non-analytic necessity. For example Robert Adams states, "I am prepared to grant that existential propositions cannot be analytic in any of these three ways, but I do not see any good reason to believe that all necessary truths must be analytic."⁵³ Nielsen, on the other hand is determined to show all necessary truths *are* analytic. Some arguments against the position that all necessary truths are analytic have already been given in chapter one. However, other difficulties plague the notion. One problem is, as Adams states, "It has become notorious that the notion of analyticity itself is difficult to analyze."⁵⁴ Nielsen seems to think that being analytic is the same as being tautological.⁵⁵ While others reject this theory, the crucial issue here is whether there can or cannot be non-analytic necessities.

First, a distinction must be made between the *a priori* and the analytic. Nielsen argues that only analytic statements are *a priori*.⁵⁶ What is important is not what is *a priori*, but what is necessarily true. As the term '*a priori*' has more than one meaning, we will define it for the purposes of this argument as that which is prior to experience. Although *a priori* is often used in conjunction with analyticity (the two concepts are often thought to be identical) they must be kept distinct.⁵⁷ Analytic is that which is essential to the concept of something, while the *a priori* is 'psychologistic'; it has to do with the mind. Both are *a priori* but in different ways. One can believe something to be true because (a) it is a necessary truth with its truth following from its meaning, or (b) it can be believed to be true because our minds are constructed to automatically believe it. For example, as previously argued, the concept of 'having 12 edges' is analytic to the concept of 'being a cube'. One would only learn this through experience and must realize that the truth of this statement cannot be found through any other means than experience. Therefore, the analyticity here is *a priori* in sense (a), but not necessarily *a priori* in sense (b). On the other hand, if human beings were constructed to believe every object or event must have a cause, and this belief came prior to any experience, then this would be *a priori* but not necessarily analytic. If this were true, one might necessarily believe everything had a cause, however in external reality there might be causeless events.

Another example to consider would be that there are possible worlds where there are no blue objects; the color blue does not exist in these worlds. Any inhabitants of these worlds might not be able to conceive of anything being colored blue as the color blue would be totally outside of their experience and color is something we learn ostensively. It might seem to the inhabitants of these worlds that the definition of 'being colored' means being red or green or yellow, etc., or in other words any of the colors except for blue.⁵⁸ Of course it is possible for objects to be blue. The conceptual powers of the inhabitants in the blue-free worlds is not the same as logical possibility in and of itself. Even though the inhabitants of these worlds would necessarily think of 'being colored' as being red or green etc., due to the limits of their powers of conception or imagination, they would be mistaken in their judgement of necessity. For all we know there are colors we are unable to imagine,

yet exist in worlds other than the actual one. There is no reason to assume *a priori*, that is, prior to experience, that everything which seems intuitively true to the human mind must be true in reality.

With this in mind we can now proceed to an analysis of Nielsen's argument. He attacks the concept that there are *a priori* non-analytic statements by attempting to refute a number of alleged examples which exist. The example which will be examined here is one that was given by Anthony Kenny. Nielsen states:

He (Kenny) claims that the following statements are *a priori* without being analytic:

1. Nothing can be both red and green all over at the same time.
2. Temporal precedence is transitive but irreflexive.

Kenny gives no argument at all to establish that they are not analytic. Yet it seems to me that it is only because of its ambiguity that 1) might be thought *not* to be analytic. Such a sentence-type, like the sentence-type 'Tadpoles are young frogs', is sometimes used analytically and sometimes empirically. Someone might carefully look to see if down under the red, one might detect a layer of green--the red having a certain transparency; or if down under the green, one might detect a red as one sometimes sees a brown bottom through greenish water. If someone used the sentence-type 1) in that way one could tell that he was making an empirical statement. If instead he employed the sentence-type to make a claim to which evidence is *in principle* irrelevant and if it were also a remark which no one who understood the conventions of the language could regard as a remark which could be intelligibly denied, then he would be employing that sentence-type analytically.⁵⁹

The last point made by Nielsen needs to be addressed. He believes that a sentence like 'Nothing can be both red and green all over at the same time', to which evidence was in principle irrelevant and which to any competent speaker could not be intelligibly denied, would be an analytic statement. One may ask why this is so. The meaning of evidence being in principle irrelevant is that one would know 'nothing can be both red and green all over at the same time' without seeing any evidence and no evidence could ever falsify this belief. What I think Nielsen is arguing is that all necessities are *De Dicto* analytic ones; that necessity depends upon our use of language.

I have already argued at length that this view of necessity is false. The knowledge of some necessities is not in principle irrelevant to evidence, e.g., water is H₂O and all cubes have 12 edges. Further, if Nielsen wishes to stipulate that analytic includes every necessary property a thing has or does not have, then he is free to do so. But this is a pointless victory. If every necessary property which a thing has is analytic to it, then of course it would be analytic to a red thing that it not be colored green at the same time. This makes 'analytic' synonymous with 'necessary'. But this does not mean there wouldn't be distinctions between different kinds of analytic truths. There are still important distinctions between the analytic truths that

sergeants have three stripes, all cubes have 12 edges, all bachelors are men and that all things which are colored red are not at the same time colored green. If one adopts Nielsen's philosophy that all necessary truths are analytic, then one must also make distinctions between different kinds of analytic truths, and this brings one back to the original problem.

The next point is, as I have stated, there are necessities in reality. The examples given to demonstrate this were that all triangles have 3 corners, all human beings are persons, and so forth. The belief that there are necessities in reality would open the door to the possibility of necessary existence. This, however would not prove that there are beings that exist necessarily. Of course to say that all triangles have 3 sides or nothing can be colored red and green in the same space and time, does not entail that any triangles or any colored objects actually exist. Thus, there is a difference between these examples and God's necessary existence. To show there is necessity in the way things are, while it rebuts a particular attack, does not show there any things that necessarily exist; exist in all possible worlds. Nielsen goes on to argue that the lack of any other affirmative existential objects puts the concept of God as a necessary being in a precarious position.⁶⁰ He states the coherence of God-talk is in question. The only way one could understand God as a logically necessary self-explanatory being would be to show other cases of logically necessary *a priori* truths. David Schrader argues similarly, we cannot understand how God could be logically necessary.⁶¹

Responding to an argument by Norman Malcolm, Nielsen attacks the notion that there are things with "logically necessary or *a priori* existential propositions".⁶² Malcolm offers six different examples of *a priori* existential propositions: there are an infinite number of natural numbers, a prime number greater than seven, minds, there are material objects, there were material objects, there is a universe.⁶³ Nielsen argues that none of these are logically necessary, and with the exception of numbers and God's mind, these examples do not seem to be logically necessary in the sense of being true in all possible worlds.

If one believes there is no concrete entity of which God is so enamored that he creates it in every possible world, then it follows on a classical theistic basis, that God is the only entity which exists in all possible worlds. Abstract entities, on a theistic basis, are in some sense part of God. The end result is that from a classical theistic point of view, only one necessary being would be *expected*. Included in Nielsen's argument is the belief that the lack of understanding of what God is due to the fact that no other examples of self-explanatory, necessary beings exist. The concept of God cannot be understood because it is radically different from anything else in one's realm of experience. Therefore, it follows that the concept of God is incoherent because it cannot be understood.

For anyone who does not accept Nielsen's verificationist presuppositions, this argument will be unsound. God is unique in certain respects by the very definition of God. Why should it be presumed *a priori* that there cannot be a unique being? Besides, a coherent concept of what a being is like does exist. A self-explanatory and logically necessary being is a being which exists in all possible worlds and is

not dependent upon any other being for its existence. It would exist no matter the circumstance. It is true one cannot fully comprehend such a being, may have a difficult time imagining what this being would be like, and cannot 'picture' such a being in one's mind, but that is irrelevant. The basic concept can be understood well enough.

Apart from all of the difficulties with Nielsen's thesis, it must still be necessarily true that some 'things' exist necessarily. For philosophers like Nielsen all existence is contingent, and necessarily so. It is impossible that there be any necessary beings. Still, there has to be some kind of reality, however abstract or attenuated, that necessarily exists. If there are no necessary beings, then all the beings that do or could exist are contingent, that is they exist but might not have existed. In addition, there could have been different beings than the ones that actually exist. But then there must be, necessarily so, a potentiality for certain things to exist. In short, there must be other possible worlds than the actual one. If there are other possible worlds then there are necessarily other possible worlds. Therefore, one comes to the conclusion that there really are, even in Nielsen's theory, certain necessary truths. Whether one takes a realist view toward possible worlds and believes that there are abstract objects, or take a constructivist view wherein possible worlds are just mental constructions of logical possibilities, these possible worlds must exist in some sense. One need not determine their ontological status, but rather note that whatever they are thought to be, possible worlds necessarily exist. Therefore, necessary 'beings' exist, even in a theory that excludes the possibility of necessary being. These necessary possible worlds are different than the list which Malcolm gave, but are some kind of reality nonetheless. So for Nielsen, and those philosophers who agree with him, what is ultimate is pure possibility or potentiality, and this exists necessarily.

Another argument regarding the issue of logical versus factual necessity for God was offered by Keith Yandell in response to Alvin Plantinga's defense of logical necessity. Yandell states:

[W]hile God has *logically necessary existence* does not seem to be contradictory, it also does not seem that God has *logically contingent existence* is contradictory. . . either (i) it is logically contradictory that God has *logically necessary existence*, or (ii) it is logically contradictory that God has *logically contingent existence*. If (i) is true, it is necessarily true that God has *logically-contingent existence*, or it is *logically necessary* that God does not exist; if (ii) is true, it is true that God has *logically necessary existence* or it is *logically contradictory* that God exists. . . . Nothing in the 'possible worlds' version of the ontological argument, so far as I can see, establishes that we should accept (i) rather than (ii).⁶⁴

I maintain the logically necessary God is logically prior to the logically contingent God. That is, if the logically necessary God exists, he exists of his own necessity, or if he does not exist, the reason he doesn't is because of his own internal impossibility. Nothing outside him causes him to exist or not exist. If it is

impossible for the LNG and the logically contingent God or LCG to exist together, then the existence of the LCG is logically dependent upon the LNG. If the LNG does not exist, because he cannot, then the LCG *might* exist. Therefore, the LCG's existence is logically dependent upon the existence or non-existence of the LNG. The LNG has ontic and logical priority here. This is due to the fact that the coherence of the LNG depends only upon himself; only the internal coherence of the LNG matters when it comes to the issue of whether he exists or not. This is not so with the LCG. The possibility of his existence depends upon the internal coherence of LNG. The LCG can be internally coherent, and still not prevent the existence of the LNG; as long as the LNG is internally coherent, he exists. If the LNG's internal nature is coherent, nothing else matters. The LCG can be either internally coherent or incoherent and still not exist as long as the LNG's internal nature is free of contradiction. Therefore, a crucial asymmetry exists.

The LCG's existence is not independent; it depends upon external conditions. For the LCG to exist, there must be some incoherence in the concept of the LNG. On the other hand, the defender of the LNG need not worry about coherency of the LCG. The LCG may be internally coherent but would still not exist if the concept of the LNG is coherent. As the LCG is a being that does not have the reason for its existence internal to itself, if it exists at all, it is by chance.

As this point will have importance later on, it will be stated formally:

(3.12) The logically necessary God is absolutely ontologically and logically independent, by the definition of logical necessity.

(3.13) The logically contingent God is dependent upon an external condition, that of the internal incoherence of the logically necessary God. That is, the LNG must be incoherent for the FNG to exist.

(3.14) Therefore, the logically necessary God is logically prior to the logically contingent God.

Although Yandell's argument is formally correct, his thought is misleading. The two concepts of God are not symmetrical, the LNG is prior to the LCG.

The final criticism of the concept of a logically necessary God comes from the 'Pancreationist' or 'accommodationist' viewpoint. This viewpoint maintains, that contrary to the traditional thinking about God, God is the creator of everything, *including his own attributes*. More accurately stated, God exists on his own, totally unlike anything in creation. God in his essence is both completely unknowable to us and beyond any of the laws that govern the universe, *including the laws of logic*. The attributes which are normally associated with God, e.g., omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, etc., are not part of God's primordial nature, but rather just properties that God 'takes on'. As Roy Clouser, an exponent of the accommodationist view states, "[I]t is not the case that creatures share some of God's uncreated properties, but that God reveals himself by giving to creatures

some of the properties that he has created and assumed to himself. These constitute God's revealed nature which is the only nature that is humanly knowable."⁶⁵

Additionally Clouser says, "[G]od's uncreated, unrevealed being is unknowable by us. It is not governed by any of the (created) laws which govern creatures, and so cannot be conceptualized by us."⁶⁶ That such independence includes the laws of logic is made explicit by Clouser.

We cannot spin out an extended account of God's own nature beyond what he has revealed on the assumption that he conforms to the laws of logic (or any other created laws) in such a way that we can reconstruct his nature by doing rationalistic metaphysical theology. . . . Running a logical credit check on God is to subject the creator to the laws he has set over his creatures, and thereby reduces him to creaturely status.⁶⁷

The implications for logical necessity are then made clear by Clouser.

[G]od's self-existence is not to be identified with his being logically necessary. The logical necessity of anything is a consequence of its being governed by logical laws, which are not themselves divine and so do not govern the being of God. *This is why whatever can be proven would thereby not be God.* Nor is God to be thought of as existing in all possible worlds. There is no absolute uncreated environment of logical possibility in which God exists. Logical possibility is a constituent part of the law-side of creation and-aside from God's accommodation to it-is only rightly applied to existing creatures as limits upon what they may do, or cause, or undergo.⁶⁸

To summarize the accomodationist position, God in himself is utterly unlike anything in the created universe, and therefore totally unknowable. Everything that exists in the universe, including the basic laws of logic, were created by God and are not binding upon him in his essence. However, God accommodates us by 'taking on' some of the attributes we commonly think of him possessing, e.g., omniscience, omnipotence, perfect goodness, etc. These properties are not descriptive of how God 'really is' in himself, but rather properties he adopts in order that we may know him.

This account of God is both strongly counter-intuitive and contrary to traditional theology. Clouser argues the traditional account is subject to several powerful counter arguments and that the accomodationist view better fits biblical evidence.⁶⁹ First Clouser states if one takes the traditional instead of the accomodationist view, then one is forced to think God is 'composed' of his perfections. That is, God's nature is made of his properties like omniscience, omnipotence, etc. But, argues Clouser, if this were the case, God would be dependent upon these properties, and this entails God is not self-existent.⁷⁰ He would be *ontologically* dependent upon these properties.

This argument is confused. In saying that, necessarily, God has the properties of being omniscient, omnipotent, etc., one is not saying these properties exist

independent of God who is ontologically dependent upon them. Rather, one is saying this is what God is; a being who is omnipotent, omniscient, omni-benevolent, etc. These are all *N-properties* for God, he could not exist apart from them, but since he necessarily exists, he necessarily has them. It is *impossible*, in the strictest sense of the word, for these properties not to exist, or for God not to possess them. God cannot exist apart from these properties and these properties cannot exist apart from him. Therefore, Clouser's argument that God is dependent upon these properties and would not exist if the properties did not, is fallacious. It may be part of the number 4's essence to be evenly divisible by 2, and therefore the number 4 would not exist if this property did not. The fact that the number 4 might disappear or that it might not have existed, hardly merits concern. After all, it is unlikely that the property of 'being evenly divisible by 2' will some day quarrel with the number 4 and leave in a huff, leaving the poor number 4 to die of loneliness. The same holds true for God and his properties.

If one speaks, as Clouser does, of God being dependent upon his properties, it sounds as if the properties were an independent being, external to God, upon which he is dependent. This picture is indeed impossible. God is not dependent upon anything external to himself. Rather, these properties (and other ones) are what God *is*. God's omniscience, for example, is part of the being of God and is not separable or distinct from him. God is 'made' of his properties; they *are* him. God is only dependent upon these properties in the same sense that everything depends, for its existence, upon what it is; nothing can exist apart from itself. Therefore, this argument fails.

The Thomistic response to Clouser's argument which involves the doctrine of simplicity was outlined above; God's being is identical with his nature.⁷¹ Therefore, God *is* his nature. The sense in which he depends upon his properties is nothing other than his dependence upon himself. Clouser offers two arguments against the doctrine of divine simplicity. First, he states "[I]f God is identical with each of his properties, then it logically follows that each property is identical with each of the others."⁷² The second difficulty he adduces is "[I]f God is identical with his properties, which are all identical with one another, then God *is* a single abstract property."⁷³ Before examining these arguments we must clarify the doctrine of divine simplicity, and also see if the doctrine of simplicity is the same as the doctrine of God (with *N-properties*) which was described above. Brian Leftow summarizes the doctrine of God's simplicity as:

(3.15) God has no material parts.

(3.16) God is not distinct from his essential attributes.

(3.17) God's essential attributes are not distinct from one another.

(3.18) God does not have attributes which are distinct from one as contingent and necessary attributes are.

(3.19) God is not distinct from his essence.⁷⁴

(3.15) presents no problem for the theist as almost all contemporary theists consider God to be immaterial. (3.16) is too detailed to be discussed in any depth here, but basically this means that God *is* his *N-properties*, that he is identical, is the same in all worlds, as the properties that he has necessarily. (3.19) is entailed by (3.16); God is his essence, he could not possibly be other than he is. In this sense God's essence is identical with his existence, in order for him to exist he must have these attributes. Leftow believes (3.18) is difficult, therefore we will not discuss this doctrine. The most puzzling claim for me is (3.17). It certainly seems God's knowledge that Smith is bald is distinct from his ability to create wombats. On this Eleanor Stump and Norman Kretzman state:

According to the doctrine of simplicity, what human beings call God's omnipotence or God's omniscience is the single eternal action considered under descriptions they find variously illuminating, or recognized by them under different effects or manifestations of it. What the doctrine requires one to understand about all the designations for the divine attributes is that they are all identical in reference but different in sense, referring in various ways to the one actual entity which is God himself . . . 'Perfect power' and 'Perfect knowledge' are precise analogues for 'the morning star' and 'the evening star': non-synonymous expressions designating quite different manifestations of one and the same thing.⁷⁵

In general Stump and Kretzman's position may be explained with the following example. The planet Venus is both the morning star and the evening star. So these two terms refer to the same, identical object. But the sense is different because Venus appears at two different times, under different sets of conditions. They suggest the same is true for God's properties. It seems to me, however, the analogy is strained. In the case of Venus, the planet itself is the same whether it is perceived as the morning star or the evening star. The difference is how it is perceived by us. In the case of God's properties, this would imply God's knowing that $2 + 2 = 4$ is the same as his ability to create wombats. It only seems different to us because the conditions under which they are perceived are different.

It seems completely mysterious to me to say God's knowing that $2 + 2 = 4$ is the same as his ability to create wombats. These are two completely different things, one is about knowledge and the other is about power. It is easy to see how a physical object, such as the planet Venus, could look different under different sets of circumstances. Even under different conditions what is still being considered is a physical object. When considering the knowledge that $2 + 2 = 4$ and the power to create wombats, we are considering two entirely different kinds of powers, which cannot even in thought be reduced to one another or to some third thing. It would make sense to say God's power to create wombats is really the same as his power to create platypuses, as what is being considered is one kind of thing--power. One can see how the power to accomplish one thing is also the power to accomplish something else, just as the power to lift 200 pounds is also the power to lift 100

pounds. But knowledge is something else entirely.

It is true for God that knowledge and power are necessarily co-extensive. It cannot be the case that God knows $2 + 2 = 4$ but does not have the power to create wombats. In every possible world he has both these properties. However, necessary co-extension is not the same as identity. It does no good to say, as Stump and Kretzman did, that "'Perfect power is identical with perfect knowledge' does not entail that power is identical with knowledge any more than the fact that the summit of a mountain's east slope is identical with the summit of its west slope entails the identity of the slopes."⁷⁶ Power is power and knowledge is knowledge and the two concepts are simply not the same. It would seem these concepts are both simples--concepts that cannot be explained in terms of anything else. The summit of two slopes may be the same though the slopes are different, but a summit is one kind of thing. The perfection of power and the perfection of knowledge are still two different things. There is an ambiguity between the perfection of the being who has these attributes and the perfection of the attributes themselves. The perfection of knowledge and power is both omniscience and omnipotence, and God is the being who is omniscient and omnipotent. Therefore, God is the perfection of these properties, they are both necessarily and analytically contained in the concept of God. Although God is perfect knowledge and perfect power, this does not mean that perfect knowledge and perfect power are the same thing in themselves. There still exist an irreducible distinction between the two.

Another argument against divine simplicity is that since knowledge and power are irreducibly different things-simples-they cannot be the same. Let us suppose that in God they are the same. If perfect knowledge, perfect power, and perfect goodness are identical in God, then, as Clouser states, "[t]his would vitiate any possibility of our language applying to God. If God's goodness is identical with his power, then what we mean by the words 'goodness' and 'power' are just not what God has at all for we have no conception of goodness that is not different from power".⁷⁷ Simply put, if power, knowledge, and goodness are the same thing in God, then one has no notion of what they would be like. If one has no notion of what God's properties are like, then one has no notion of what God is like. In short, the doctrine of divine simplicity, when taken to the extreme understanding that all of God's properties are identical, leads to complete skepticism about God.

It seems we can avoid the extreme of saying all of God's properties are identical and still maintain that he necessarily possesses them by utilizing necessary co-extension. God would have his internal *N-properties* necessarily-they would be analytically entailed by the concept of him as the greatest possible being-the GPB. God is necessarily omniscient and necessarily omnipotent without these properties being exactly the same in him. God can have his real, internal properties necessarily without the full doctrine of simplicity. (I do not reject the whole doctrine of simplicity, just part of it. It does appear to be true that God is lacking in parts, such as spatial and temporal parts.) Thus, Clouser's statement, "If God is identical with each of his properties then it logically follows that each of the properties is identical with each of the others"⁷⁸ is incorrect. For necessary co-

extension does not lead to the same absurdities as the full doctrine of simplicity.

To make this point totally clear let us consider an analogy. The number 4 has several similarities to God. Like God, the number 4 is immaterial, and has no existence apart from its properties, as in (3.15) and (3.16). It also has different properties, as does God, such as 'being evenly divisible by 2' and 'being less than 5'. In all possible worlds in which it exists, which is to say all possible worlds, it has these *N-properties*. They are necessarily co-extensive, and by the argument given for God's properties being identical, the number 4's properties should be identical. However, it is false to say 'being evenly divisible by 2' is identical with 'being less than 5', they are clearly not the same properties. Even if *A* is identical with *x*, *y* and *z*, it does not follow that *x* and *z* are identical. Here is the ambiguity which was noted above. To say that *A* is identical with *x*, *y* and *z* can mean *A* is identical with *x*, and identical with *y*, and identical with *z*; *A* is identical with each one separately. In this case it must be true that *x* is identical with *y*, and identical with *z*, and that *y* is identical with *z*. The statement that *A* is identical with *x*, *y* and *z* can also be interpreted to mean *A* is identical with them collectively, that is, being *A* is identical with being *x* and *y* and *z* together. 'Being identical with' can mean either 'numerical identity or being exactly the same thing as' or 'have some property or properties necessarily'. In this latter case there is no reason to think *x* must be identical with *y* or *z*, or that *y* is identical with *z*.

Similarly, in the case of God, if one means by the statement 'God is identical with being omnipotent' that 'being God' and 'being omnipotent' are the same thing, then of course God is also identical with 'being omniscient', so that 'being God' and 'being omniscient' are numerically the same thing, then 'being omnipotent' and 'being omniscient' must be the same thing. If by stating 'God is identical with being omnipotent' one means merely that God has the property of 'being omnipotent' in every possible world, then there is no reason why he could not have other properties. In the latter case if God is identical with his properties, it does not mean God is identical with the properties of 'being omnipotent', 'being omniscient', and so on, it just means he necessarily has these properties. There is no reason under this interpretation to think that 'being omnipotent' is the same as 'being omniscient'. It seems the whole debate on divine simplicity has been debilitated by the confusion of the two different interpretations. As first interpretation leads to counter-intuitive absurdities, it seems best to adopt the second interpretation. By adopting the second interpretation there is no reason to posit that all of God's properties are identical with one another. Clouser's argument fails because of this confusion.

Clouser's second objection to the doctrine of divine simplicity is that if God is identical with his properties then he must be a property. First let us state the concept of God as a property has been defended.⁷⁹ Second, in light of the above argument, we can see that God can be identical, in some sense, with his properties, without having one simple property. This being the case, there is no reason to think God is a property. In solving the first problem one also solves the second.

Having defended the traditional notion of God, the accomodationist view must

now be examined. This, as explained above, is the view that God's revealed nature, which is the only nature we can know, is created by him. God's uncreated nature, is totally unknowable to us, unknowable in fact and principle. This is mainly because God in himself is not bound by the laws of logic, and therefore cannot be an object of our thought. The way we are constructed enables us to only know those things which are governed by the basic laws of logic. Clouser gives the example of God's wisdom.⁸⁰ Wisdom is not part of the nature of God himself, but was created and then 'assumed' by God, in order that we may know him. In this view, God is not wise in himself, rather wisdom is just a property that God has created and then 'taken on'.

Clouser makes two basic arguments in favor of accommodationism. One is the philosophic attack on the traditional view, which has already been discussed. The other is an appeal to the Bible.⁸¹ This second line of reasoning will not be answered here, as this is not a work of Biblical theology. It will suffice to say I find his scriptural exegesis unconvincing. However, a philosophic examination of accommodationism itself is legitimate.

First, in this view it should be noted one has no knowledge of God in himself. All one has is the knowledge of properties which God created and then 'assumed'. The exact meaning of 'assumed' is unclear. Is it like a man putting on a mask? If so then one would still have no real knowledge of God. Clouser's view closely parallels Kant's theory of the noumenal. With Kant, reality is unknowable, all we can know are appearances. Similarly, with Clouser, all one can know is 'appearances' of God. As a result the word 'God' becomes meaningless. For any object x , where x is intrinsically unknowable, then x is meaningless. Nothing can be said about it, nothing can be known about it, nothing can be thought about it. One cannot even say x is an object, or that it can be coherently considered. The term x is effectively gibberish, and any discussion of it is without content. *Nothing* whatsoever can be said of it.

Clouser, on the one hand maintains God in himself is unknowable, yet on the other hand cannot refrain from telling us things about him. For example, "*God reveals himself by giving to creatures some of the properties he has created and assumed to himself.*"⁸² "God's uncreated, unrevealed being is unknowable by us. It is not governed by any of the (created) laws which govern creatures, and so cannot be conceptualized."⁸³ "He differs from creatures radically by being the self-existent creator."⁸⁴ "As creator of all the laws of creation, God is not automatically subject to them as creatures are-though in his accommodation he may abide by them in certain specific respects so as to be understandable to us."⁸⁵ In all of the above quotations, Clouser does what he tells us is impossible-he makes assertions about God in himself and not how he accommodates himself to us. To deny that we can make assertions about God is to make an assertion about God. Thus, Clouser contradicts himself, and accommodationism is incoherent. When one says 'God accommodates himself to us by taking on these certain properties', one is actually stating a perception of God, one really says nothing of God himself. Therefore, one is actually stating 'God has these certain properties' and the rest of the sentence is

meaningless, as it refers to an unknowable object. An object that is intrinsically unknowable cannot be referred to or conceptualized in *any* way. Finally, the statement that 'God has these certain properties' is consistent with traditional theology, not accommodationism.

There is also the matter of whether God in himself (apart from his accommodation) has properties. Remember that one of the arguments used for accommodationism was that if God had properties or perfections, then he would be dependent upon them. Clouser found this unacceptable.⁸⁶ Then it must be asked if God, in his 'unaccommodated' self, has properties? If he does, then why isn't he dependent upon them? It was the contention of this argument that if God is dependent upon anything, even his own properties, then he could not be self-existent. Any strength in the argument Clouser made against God having properties would also work against his own view. However, if one believes that God has no properties, one is in even deeper trouble. How could a being with absolutely no properties exist, much less create the universe? Something which has no properties is nothing at all. Again, the accommodationist view is incoherent. All the properties the accommodationist ascribes to God-self-existence, being the creator of the universe-do not really tell one anything about God, they only describe ways one could think about him. For God, whether one knows anything about him or not, must either have properties or not. This simple piece of logic still generates the problems outlined above. The very idea of an intrinsically unknowable being is radically incoherent. According to accommodationism, a being with no wisdom created absolute wisdom, a being with no power created omnipotence, a being with no goodness created absolute goodness, etc. All of this looks problematic in the extreme, but the line drawn between the universe and God in himself prevents us from examining the matter further. One should be suspicious of a view which makes seemingly absurd statements and then states that no further investigation is possible.

An accommodationist defense to the above might be that although accommodationism seems irrational, this is just because we are expecting the laws of logic to work on God. Accommodationism states that logic is a creation of God and that God is not bound to it. Naturally, absurdities will be generated when logic is pushed beyond its rightful bounds.

This defense, however, does not work. The accommodationist tries to draw a line between the universe, where logic is valid, and God himself, where it is not. Thus, reality is bifurcated into rational and irrational parts. To draw a line between the rational and the irrational, one must know something about the irrational. Otherwise one could not know where the boundary between the rational and irrational lie. It is impossible to know anything about the irrational, by definition, if something is not bound by the laws of identity and non-contradiction, then it has no determinate nature. Therefore by the saying there is a distinction between the rational and irrational 'parts' of reality, one is saying there is a rationality to the irrational-which undermines the accommodationist view. One could not draw a boundary between the rational and irrational. Further, the rational will have

relations to the irrational. For example, the universe is supposed to have been created by God. If this were the case, then some of the relations of the objects in the rational 'part' of reality would have irrational relations. In the case of the universe being created by God, one could say the universe was created by a being who simultaneously and in exactly the same way existed and did not exist. One cannot bifurcate reality into the rational and irrational-rationality will 'spill over' into irrationality and vice versa-making the whole system incoherent.

If one were to take the irrationality of accommodationism seriously, one could say God is simultaneously and in exactly the same manner, knowable and unknowable and neither, omnipotent and powerless and neither, wise and ignorant and neither, etc. One could say God had no properties and that he had an infinite number of them, or that God cannot be conceptualized and can be conceptualized. Indeed, one could say God created the universe even though he did not exist.⁸⁷ Finally, one could hold to the accommodationist theory of God while simultaneously saying God had all of the properties traditional theism ascribes to him. In short, accommodationism leads to total incoherence and irrationality. Any attempt to introduce irrationality into a system will end up making the whole system irrational. Irrationality cannot be bound and stuck neatly into a corner. Rather, once introduced, it destroys everything in that system. Accommodationism is an incoherent system. To avoid, this one must hold to a system where there is absolutely no irrationality.

This answers the other objection which was made by Clouser; God exists in all possible worlds. Clouser opposes this because if one were to accept this model of God, then one would have accepted that logic is more basic than God, that there was something outside of his control. But as was stated earlier, this is a misreading of classical theism. The fact God exists in all possible worlds really entails that God is determinate of all things. Which worlds are possible depends upon him and his nature. Could God create a world where $2 + 2 = 5$? Under the accommodationist view the answer is yes. In this view there are no impossible worlds; worlds exist where God creates and governs the universe while simultaneously not existing. The traditional view is different. God cannot create worlds where $2 + 2 = 5$. This is because the laws of logic are ultimately about him, not because they are superior to him-they are part of his nature. God never goes against his own nature. This is not a limitation, for anything that God could never do is nothing. $2 + 2 = 5$ is nothing, it is not in the final analysis a coherent statement.

Given the above, it is apparent that the problems with the traditional view are trivial when compared to those of the accommodationism view. Why then does anyone accept accommodationism? Part of the answer lies in Clouser's statement that his is the "radically biblical view"⁸⁸ and that the traditional viewpoint is really pagan. With all due respect, I believe the shoe lies on the other foot. The traditional view is the biblical one while the accommodationist view is pagan, being ultimately derived from Plato, Plotinus, and others including the gnostics and kabbalists. This view is expressed by Thomas Molnar, who labels it the "ultra-

supernaturalist search.”⁸⁹ The general concept was there is one God who we can know, and is the immediate cause of the universe. Basically, there exists another God who is unknowable, and is the ultimate cause of everything. Molnar states:

We are back at the ‘two gods’ or ‘God beyond God’ concept, inspired, in the case of Denys, by neo-Platonism; we find the same influence exerted on Jewish thought also: under the influence of the neo-Platonist speculation concerning the One, the kabbalists proceeded to de-personalize God and to transform him into a ‘beyond being’ from which the fullness of being proceeds.

This tradition whose source is, as we have found, late-Platonic speculation mixed with gnostic and other types of arguments, continued uninterruptedly, although mostly on the margin of orthodoxy and always at least suspected by its representatives.⁹⁰

Accommodationism, since it denies that God in himself has any properties we can know, or even any properties at all, de-personalizes God. Instead of the personal God of the Bible we have the abstract impersonal ‘beyond being’ of ancient pagan thought. It is true that accommodationism states there is really only one God, and that in his accommodation to us is personal. But the God we can know--omniscient, omnipotent and personal, is really just a mask for an unknowable whatever. Rather than being a great advance in theology, accommodationism is a reversion to ancient paganism. As Terry Miethe writes:

I have long contended that most of the rather devastating errors in the history of theology can be traced to an uncritical acceptance of God from the Neoplatonic philosophy of Plotinus. . . . This is a principle that not only transcends the physical world, as Aristotle’s God did, but transcends being itself. It is beyond being, essence, and knowledge.⁹¹

Accommodationism should thus be rejected. It is incoherent and in light of the fact that it replaces a personal God with an unknowable abstraction-if that-it is really an abandonment of theism. It opens the Christian position on God to the gibe of George Smith when he said, “Scratch the surface of a Christian and you will find an agnostic.”⁹² Therefore, the threat from accommodationism to the concept of God, who is the greatest possible being and who exists in all possible worlds, collapses.

I have examined and refuted all of the direct attacks upon the concept of the LNG. It may be concluded there is no *a priori* argument which shows the incoherence of the concept of the LNG from the nature of necessity, therefore the existence of the LNG cannot be ruled out *a priori*. All of the arguments which have been used to do so have been found fallacious. This by itself does not establish that such a being exists, but it does remove one major obstacle to his existing.

CHAPTER 4

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

In this chapter the modal version of the ontological argument will be examined for both soundness and relevancy to the concept of God. This version of the ontological argument appears to me to contain the most promise. Plantinga's version of the ontological argument is:

(4.1) The proposition *there is a maximally great being* is possible in the broadly logical sense. . .

(4.2) There is a possible world in which there is a maximally great being. . .

(4.3) Necessarily, a being with maximal greatness would be necessarily existent and would have (at least) omnipotence, omniscience and moral perfection essentially. . .

(4.4) What is necessary does not vary from possible world to possible world (so that if it is possible that *p* is necessary, then *p* is necessary).

(4.5) [T]herefore, a being that is necessarily existent and essentially omniscient, omnipotent and wholly good exists.¹

I define a maximally great being as a being who is identical with the Greatest Possible Being (GPB). That is, a maximally great being is a being who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent, etc., in all possible worlds. These terms will, in this chapter, also be synonymous with the word God. A being with maximal *excellence* will be defined as a being who has all of the above properties in one world. This is not to say that this being could not also exist as God in other worlds, even in all worlds. Therefore, a being with maximal excellence is the greatest possible being in one world, who, if he exists in all worlds, is the being with maximal greatness.

It should be noted that Plantinga's argument may be reconstructed in different ways without losing its essential nature. For example, the argument may be stated

very simply as:

(4.6) The concept of the GPB is coherent (and thus broadly logically possible).

(4.7) Necessarily, a being who is the GPB is necessarily existent, and would have (at least) omnipotence, omniscience and moral perfection essentially.

(4.8) If the concept of the GPB is coherent, then it exists in all possible worlds.

(4.9) But if it exists in all possible worlds, then it exists in the actual world.

(4.10) So the GPB exists.

This version of the ontological argument is essentially the one which Plantinga uses. For now we will discuss the first version.

There have been many objections offered to this seemingly simple argument. One might object to premise (4.4) which states what is necessary does not vary from possible world to possible world. This is not true in every version of modal logic. This objection has already been dealt with in chapter one. To summarize, it was concluded that S5 was the proper theory of modal logic because what is necessary, possible and impossible varies from world to world.

J.L. Mackie continued the debate upon the modal ontological argument putting forth two objections.² One involved an argument from world-indexed properties and the other was an assertion that it is more ontologically parsimonious to think there exists no being who is omnipotent, omniscient, etc., than to think there is. Plantinga responded to Mackie's objection in his paper "Is Theism Really a Miracle?".³ In my opinion, Plantinga had the better of it. Some things relevant to Mackie's position will appear in the discussion below.

Mackie's objections are far from being the only objections raised against Plantinga's revision of the ontological argument. Michael Tooley,⁴ Patrick Grim⁵ and Michael Martin,⁶ among others, attack the argument with one group of objections. I will begin with arguments given by Tooley.

Tooley starts off by considering any predicate *p*:

First, let '*p*' be any predicate, and introduce the new predicate '*x* is maximally *p*', defined as follows:

x is maximally *p* if and only if *x* exists in all possible worlds and is *p* in every world.⁷

With this definition, Tooley asserts one can construct parallel arguments to Plantinga's ontological argument. As this can be done with any number of predicates '*p*', the world becomes overpopulated with all sorts of necessary beings.

Besides the problem of overpopulation, Tooley sees the following difficulty:

For one can, using predicates of the form '*x* is maximally *p*', construct arguments

that lead to contradictory conclusions. Consider, for example, the two predicates defined as follows:

x is a *maximally universal solvent* if and only if *x* exists in every world and is a universal solvent in every world, where something is a universal solvent in a given world if and only if it is capable of dissolving anything in that world.

x is *maximally insoluble* if and only if *x* exists in every world and is insoluble in every world.⁸

Plantinga's argument, Tooley alleges, thus leads to contradictory results. It's Tooley's contention that the contradictions occur because the premise, one can coherently maximize a concept, is faulty.

Tooley maintains that arguments with the same logical structure as Plantinga's can be used to establish results contradictory to the conclusion of the ontological argument stating God exists. One can create a 'demonological' argument, so to speak. To do so one uses:

[T]he expressions 'the Devil' and 'maximally evil' in such a way that it is analytically true that *x* is the Devil if and only if *x* is omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly evil, and that *x* is maximally evil if and only if *x* exists in every possible world, and is omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly evil in every world, we can construct a precisely parallel argument to show that the Devil exists. And from this it follows that God does not exist.⁹

Tooley goes on to say, one can construct many arguments just as valid as Plantinga's ontological argument, but which will lead to results contradictory to it. Another argument Tooley brings forth is:

Suppose *R* is any relational property. Let us say that the relational property *R* involves individual *a* if and only if it is necessarily the case that for any *x*, *x*'s having *R* entails the existence of individual *a*. The relational property, *within five miles of the Eiffel tower*, for example, involves the Eiffel tower, but no other individuals. Given this notion, one can define, for every relational property *P*, a corresponding relative-maximal property *Q(P)* as follows:

x has the relative-maximal property *Q(P)* if and only if *x* has property *p* in every possible world which contains all of the individuals involved in property *P*.

An argument parallel to Plantinga's will then allow one to show that it is reasonable to believe there is an entity that possesses the relative-maximal property *Q*, which is based on the relational property being an omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect wombat doing the twist on the top of this page. And since every individual which is involved in that relational property--namely this page--exists in this world, it follows that it is reasonable to believe that this world contains an omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect wombat doing the twist on the top of this page.¹⁰

Patrick Grim raises similar arguments. For example, with an argument parallel to Plantinga's, one can establish the existence of both red and green leprechauns that can destroy all other leprechauns and can be destroyed by no others; an obviously contradictory result.¹¹ Michael Martin states, "Plantinga's argument can be parodied by using an argument with the same form to show the rational acceptability of fairies, ghosts, unicorns, and all manner of strange creatures."¹² Martin goes on to construct an argument parallel to Plantinga's, and facetiously attempts to show, "there is a tiny woodland creature with magical powers in our world and in every world."¹³ Thus this genre of objections imply if one accepts the ontological argument, then one must also accept necessarily existing fairies, leprechauns, devils, omnipotent wombats, etc.

Before starting a detailed examination of the above, one general principle must be offered:

(4.11) Nothing that is necessary is arbitrary.

(4.11) seems to be self-evident and analytically true simply by the definition of the terms involved. For what is necessary must be, while what is arbitrary is capricious; not fixed by rule or law. The truth of (4.11) will be instrumental in refuting the objections to the ontological argument given by Tooley, Grim, Martin and others.

Tooley maintains the use of parallel arguments will allow for the construction of predicates, and the corresponding necessary beings which will be shown to exist demonstrate the implausibility of the ontological argument. This is because one can take any property *P*, reasonably suppose it to be exemplified, therefore it exists in all possible worlds. This is based on the principle that *x* is maximally *P* if and only if *x* exists in all possible worlds and is *P* in every world. For example, let us suppose my dog Katie¹⁴ is maximally furry, exists in all possible worlds and is maximally furry in all possible worlds. On Tooley's thesis this, and a vast number of other predicates, can be defined into existence, leaving an over-population of necessary beings.

One way of attacking this is to show that properties like maximal furriness, or the property of being the perfect island cannot be plausibly maintained as great-making properties. An example of a great-making property is omniscience because knowledge is a property with a clear maximum which is reached when everything that it is logically possible to know is known. Omnipotence is another great-making property because power has a maximum which when reached, gives one the power to accomplish anything that is logically possible. Furriness, on the other hand, does not have an intrinsic maximum. It makes no sense to speak of a furriness which is so furry that it is not logically possible for anything else to be furrier. For a furry creature of any specific size, one can always posit a being with the same amount of furriness, plus one foot more. One cannot say there could be a being in all possible worlds with an infinite amount of fur, as it is obviously possible for other beings to exist which could limit the amount of fur of any creature. This rather silly example

is in fact quite similar to the concept of the perfect island. To quote Plantinga:

The idea of an island than which it's not possible that there be a greater is like the idea of a natural number than which it's not possible that there be a greater, or of a line than which none more crooked is possible. There neither is nor could be a greatest possible number; indeed there isn't a greatest *actual* number, let alone a greatest possible number. And the same goes for islands. No matter how great an island is, no matter how many Nubian maidens and dancing girls adorn it, there could always be a greater-one with twice as many, for example. The qualities that make for greatness in islands-number of palm trees, amount and quality of coconuts, for example-most of these qualities have no *intrinsic maximum*.¹⁵

Before we go on, we must deal with the objection raised by Martin. He writes, "But if one means by the 'greatest conceivable island' a perfect island, it will not have an unlimited number of coconut trees but only the *right* number of coconut trees, whatever that may be. Too many coconut trees would spoil the perfection of the island."¹⁶ One problem with this argument is that the 'right amount' of anything is subjective. What Martin thinks is the right amount of coconut trees or dancing girls may be too many or too few by Plantinga's standards, and their opinions may differ from Anselm's. For there to be a *necessary* island, we would need one with an objective perfect number of these items. After all, a perfect island would be better than any others. However, if what constitutes a perfect island differs from person to person, then there is no one island that is better than all others, and thus none that need exist. To say, for example, an island with 9,999 coconut trees is better than any other is arbitrary, and thus violates (4.11), an essential rule of necessity. The only way to have an island which is better than any other would be for God to decide that one is perfect; a tactic which Martin can hardly adopt.

Thus, the idea of a perfect island seems to be incoherent. The same could be said for furriness, crookedness, clannishness, ineptitude, etc. Using the definition of perfections, or great-making qualities with intrinsic maxima, many possible candidates for necessary existence melt away.

However, while this abolishes many candidates for perfection, many others remain. Take for example the concept of the greatest possible bowler.¹⁷ This bowler (who will henceforth be known as the Bowler), exists in all possible worlds, and always bowls a 300 game no matter what the circumstances. This kind of perfection has a maximum. Another example would be the greatest possible Elvis impersonator, who perfectly impersonates Elvis in every possible world. The argument given above loses validity with examples like these. Most philosophers would say the problem is with the ontological argument. However, there is also the possibility that the characteristics of the objects selected are not suitable for demonstrating this point. This will be the stance taken here. However to show all of the alleged counter-examples are impossible will require a good deal of discussion.

Let us examine this last possibility, that the objects described, the wombats leprechauns, etc., are impossible. First of all, the composition of necessity and

contingency present a problem. It will be argued that all alleged non-GPB necessary beings are necessarily composed of *N-properties* and *C-properties*, and that the *N-properties* are dependent upon the *C-properties*-which will result in incoherence. As defined in chapter two, *N-properties* are properties a being which exists in every possible world has in every possible world, while *C-properties* are properties that do not exist in every possible world. We must next examine the concept of the GPB, and see why in this case the object in question is *not* dependent upon *C-properties*. It will be argued that all entities save the GPB, lack, contrary to appearances, a positive reason for their existence.

The point which will be made here is that the GPB is the only concrete, primary (non-derivative) necessary being which can be coherently conceived. In order for a necessary being to exist it must satisfy two basic conditions. First, there must be some positive reason why it is necessary, and second, it must be impossible to destroy or prevent from existing (any being that can be destroyed or prevented from coming into existence cannot be a necessary being). The GPB satisfies both of these conditions. The first condition, that there be a reason, intrinsic to itself, for the GPB to exist, is satisfied in the nature of the GPB. I will argue that existence is *analytic* to the concept of the GPB. This is contrary to the beliefs of many philosophers, even to some who believe God necessarily exists.

Robert Adams writes:

It has become notorious that the notion of analyticity is difficult to analyze; but for the present purposes it seems fair to say that an analytic truth must be one of the following three sorts. (1) It may be a (broadly speaking) conditional proposition of the form $\{p \rightarrow \{ \text{If } p \text{ then } q \} \text{ or } \{ (x) (Fx \rightarrow \phi x) \} \{ \text{For every } x, \text{ if } Fx \text{ then } \phi x \} \}$, where q is a correct analysis or partial analysis of p , or ϕ of F . As has often been noted, such conditional propositions do not say that anything exists. (2) A proposition that follows formally from such conditional analyses will also be analytic, but will still not say that any particular thing or kind of thing exists. (3) Theorems of formal logic are usually counted as analytic, but they too will not say that any particular thing or kind of thing exists.¹⁸

I believe a valid form of analyticity is when one concept is contained in another. This, as was noted in chapter one, is difficult to put precisely, but can be illustrated by saying that *being trilateral* is analytic to the concept of *being a triangle*. The concept of trilaterality flows necessarily, and is in a sense, part of the concept of triangularity. When applied to the GPB, this concept will analytically entail the concept of the GPB. Therefore, when Adam's analysis is correctly applied to the concept of the GPB, existence flows analytically to that being.

The justification for this belief will be contained in the following text. The GPB (Greatest Possible Being) is not just the greatest being which actually exists, but the greatest being which could exist, in any possible world. The greatest possible being must exist in every world, if it is possible to exist at all. For if he did not, then it would be possible to conceive of a greater being, one that did exist in every possible world. If the GPB exists in every world, then he exists in the actual world.

Two objections to this argument can be immediately raised. First, even though one can conceive of a being existing in all possible worlds, this does not by itself show it is possible for any being to do so. It can be argued that it may be necessarily false for any being to exist in all possible worlds. This objection has merit, for we can conceive of things as being true that in fact are necessarily false. Nonetheless, if it is indeed possible for a being to exist in all possible worlds, then this being would be greater in at least one area over beings which exist only in some worlds. It is difficult to be great in worlds where one does not exist.

The second objection is that existence is not a great-making property. This can be responded to in a couple of ways. Let us assume we are speaking of *A-existence*, defined as extramental existence in at least the actual world. First, even if existence is not itself a great-making property, it is impossible to have great-making properties in a world in which one does not exist. Thus, even if existence is not a great-making property, it is the necessary foundation of great-making properties. Second, existence itself seems to be entailed by some necessary great-making properties. For example, independence is a great-making property. An independent being is greater than one that depends upon another being for its existence. In addition, a being which exists for a reason would seem to be greater than one which exists by chance, that is for no reason. If this is true, then the greatest possible being will be independent. It will not depend on or be caused by another being, and it will not exist by chance. Therefore, the GPB must exist necessarily and independently, for there is no other way it can exist. And if it does, then it must exist necessarily, in all possible worlds, for reasons intrinsic to itself, for there would be no other way in which to exist. Existence is thus the result of great-making properties. Formally the argument can be stated as:

(4.12) There four modes under which a thing could be conceived to exist. These are,

- (a) it can be uncaused and exist for no reason at all
- (b) it can be caused by another and exist for no reason at all
- (c) it can be caused by another being and have that as a reason for its existence
- (d) it can be uncaused and exist for a reason intrinsic to itself.

(4.13) Not (a), for a being that exists for no reason cannot be the Greatest Possible Being.

(4.14) Not (b), for the concept of a being that is caused by another and yet exists for no reason is incoherent.

(4.15) Not (c), for a being that is dependent for its existence upon another cannot be the Greatest Possible Being.

(4.16) Therefore, if there is a GPB, he must exist uncaused and for a reason *intrinsic* to himself, to his very nature.

It is obvious that (b) is self-contradictory because it states that a being could exist for no reason and yet be caused. But to be caused to exist is to have a reason for one's existence. Therefore (b) does not define the GPB. Of the remaining three definitions, (c) seems incompatible with being the greatest possible being, for to be independent of others things seems obviously greater than to be dependent upon another for one's existence. Similarly, (a) which seems to exist for no reason at all, that is, gratuitously, is incompatible with being the greatest possible being. In chapter two the arguments used against the FNG (Factually Necessary Being) are applicable here. Hence, to be the greatest possible being (GPB) one must have the reason for one's existence intrinsic to oneself. Therefore, if it is possible for the GPB to exist, then it would seem he must have the reason for his existence intrinsic to himself. If this is true, then necessary existence is a necessary foundation for the great-making properties of the GPB.

This leads us to two basic objections. A positive reason for the necessary being to exist and the negative reason which prevents all entities from being necessary except the GPB. The definition of the objects listed above does not imply that they exist in all possible worlds. For example, if the Bowler, who by definition bowls 300 games in every possible world is defined as a being which exists in all possible worlds, then of course it is analytic that he exist in all possible worlds. However this seems arbitrary. What, in the concept of being a bowler, would entail necessary existence? After all, it seems easy to conceive of a world without bowling alleys, bowling balls, etc. The critic of the ontological argument would no doubt retort that we can conceive of a world where there is no GPB. But there are crucial differences between the GPB and the Bowler. The GPB is, by definition, supposed to have *all* the great-making properties which are relevant to a necessary being. The Bowler is only supposed to have the perfection of being a perfect bowler. His only great-making property is being able to bowl 300 games every time he plays. Of course, to do this he must exist, but this by itself does nothing to entail existence in all possible worlds. The GPB, if it is possible for him to exist, must exist necessarily because he has all great-making properties, including ontological independence. Necessary existence is a necessary precondition for having great-making properties. The Bowler, on the other hand, does not have all great-making properties, thus he does not necessarily have the great making property of ontological independence. The Bowler therefore does not have necessary existence as a precondition. Ascribing necessary existence to an entity like the Bowler is an arbitrary act, which consequently contradicts (4.11).

As was mentioned above, it is easy to conceive of a world without the things which are necessary in order for the Bowler to exist, e.g., bowling alleys, bowling balls, etc. After all, there is nothing difficult about the concept of a bowling ball; it is well within the human reasoning ability. The same cannot be said for the GPB, as is implied by the very concept of an infinite being, God is beyond our capacity

to ever completely conceptualize. One's conceptualization of the non-existence of the Bowler and the things he needs is well within human abilities, while the conceptual ability to comprehend the GPB is not. Therefore, the fact we can easily conceive of the non-existence of the Bowler counts against him, while the fact that God's non-existence can be conceived does not.

There seem to be strong reasons to think a being such as the Bowler can survive negative criticisms about his survivability. Being indestructible is necessary to the concept of a necessary being. It will be argued that all non-GPB necessary beings are necessarily composed of *N-properties* and *C-properties*, and that the *N-properties* are dependent upon the *C-properties*-which leads to incoherence. Consider the case of the Bowler. The Bowler, by definition, always bowls 300 games in all worlds. Therefore, he has the property of always bowling a perfect game; bowling a 300 game is necessary. The Bowler is also a finite, contingent being. He must have a certain height, weight, shape, color, etc. That he have such properties is analytically contained in the concept of the Bowler, but *exactly* which properties, that is, which height, which weight, etc., is not so analytically contained. In different worlds, the Bowler would have different heights, different weights, etc.

The Bowler has both necessary and contingent properties. It appears the only positive property he has necessarily is that of always bowling perfectly (being a person, and being identical with himself are others). Most of his positive properties are contingent. This means that the necessary property of always bowling perfectly supervenes, and is dependent upon, the contingent ones. To be a bowler at all, the Bowler must have certain properties, height, weight, etc., but since these properties are contingent, they can fail to exist by the definition of contingency. In a world where the Bowler was an average human being, say 5'10", 175 lbs, a direct hit by an H-bomb would destroy his contingent properties. Since his necessary property is dependent upon his contingent ones for its existence, it too would cease to exist. But by definition his necessary property exists in all possible worlds, it cannot be destroyed. Therefore, the concept of the Bowler is incoherent. There are possible worlds where his contingent properties are destroyed before the necessary property of being the Bowler develops, and thus the necessary property never exists. An example of this might be a situation in which his parents are killed before he is born and he is therefore prevented from existing. It is impossible for necessary properties to supervene contingent ones, for if they did it would be like saying that which has to be is dependent upon that which does not have to be.

Some have suggested that the universe itself might be necessary, even though all the objects of which it is composed are contingent. To deny this is to commit the fallacy of composition. By definition all contingent objects can fail to exist. If the universe is composed entirely of contingent objects, it is difficult to see how the universe could be necessary. For if all the objects ceased to exist, there would be nothing left of the universe. Chapter five will deal with this objection in greater detail.

Another point to consider is that only the GPB may be plausibly thought of as a necessary being. The negative reason for this is that only the GPB can coherently

describe a being which can neither be created or destroyed. It is analytic that one can only create or destroy according to how much power one possesses.¹⁹ In this case when speaking of the GPB, one is speaking of a being whose powers are absolute and not relative to the different worlds in which he exists. By definition the GPB cannot be omnipotent in some worlds and only moderately powerful in others. He must be omnipotent in all worlds. Therefore, no other being could have the power to create or destroy him. To create him, a being would have to possess greater power than the GPB, which is a logical impossibility. This is not true of any other being. There could, in some world, exist some being with greater power that could create or destroy it. It is analytic for another being to have the greatest amount of power in all worlds. Therefore, it is necessary for the possibility to exist, even if in fact false, that any other being could be created or destroyed. Writes James Ross:

[F]or any property, G , which can be possessed by anything whose existence is contingent, there is some property F , which neither entails nor is entailed by G , such that $(x) (Fx \text{ NPC } Gx)$ [non-paradoxically causally implies] Gx is consistent and such that $(x) (\neg Fx \cdot Gx)$ is also consistent (although, of course, these are not co-consistent). Hence in some possible world (there is an x) (Gx) is causally implied by (there is an x) (Fx) .²⁰

According to Ross, for any contingent being there are possible worlds in which a being, even if it exists uncaused in the actual world, exists as caused by another. Let us examine this concept. Every being that exists or can exist must have properties; a being without any properties is nothing. These properties are either finite or infinite in extent. One common property, power, will be defined here as the ability to accomplish things. Beings with a finite amount of power can accomplish a certain limited amount of things, while a being with an infinite amount of power could accomplish anything that is logically possible. In other words, a being with an infinite amount of power could be omnipotent.²¹ If a being has a finite amount of power, then there can be in some possible world, beings with more power which could create or destroy it.

The reasons for this should be clear. One kind of power is the ability to destroy, another is the ability to defend oneself from attack. Although these different kinds of power are not the same thing, they are commensurate, that is, they can be compared to each other. If A has p amount of power to destroy and B has q amount of power to defend itself, and p and q are equal, or p is less than q on some commensurable scale, then B cannot be destroyed by A (unless B permits it). There should be some value of p which is greater than q , and if A has it then A can destroy B . Even if in the actual world there is no being who possesses p to such a degree that it is sufficient to destroy B , there are possible worlds where such a being exists. If a being has a finite amount of power, finite in all respects, then for this being, the amount of power it has will necessarily be represented by some token such as p or q . Therefore, these tokens will have a finite value. It seems true that for any being

with a finite amount of power, there could be some other being with a greater power which could destroy it or if it had an origin, prevent it from coming into existence. The analysis which has been applied to the property of power can be applied to other properties as well, however, power is the most relevant to the situation at hand.

Let us again consider the case of the Bowler. The Bowler has x amount of defensive power. However, as was argued above, for any finite amount of power q , there can always be $q + 1$ amount of power p so that p can overpower q . Maintaining that some finite amount of power is the greatest possible amount of power is analogous to maintaining that there is a greatest natural number. Therefore there can be beings with the power to destroy the Bowler. If this is true, then in some worlds these beings will destroy or fail to create the Bowler. In which case he would fail to exist in some worlds, and thus not be a logically necessary being. This analysis applies to all beings with less than an infinite amount of at least defensive power. Only a being with an infinite amount of defensive power in all possible worlds could therefore be a logically necessary being. Since there is no logical difference between defensive and offensive power, a being with omnipotent defensive power may be thought of as a being omnipotent in destructive ability as well. Since we are speaking of the power to defeat any logically possible attack, it would seem any being who has this ability must also have the power to do many other things. It seems plausible to think he must have the power to do anything, that is, be an omnipotent simpliciter in all possible worlds.

An indestructible being must also be omniscient. Besides the power there must be the intelligence to use the power. One can, for instance, imagine a generator with an infinite amount of power. However, one could not call such a being omnipotent. Only intelligent beings can understand situations and also how to use power. For a being to be omnipotent in any respect it must be intelligent. If a being is to be indestructible in all possible worlds, then he must be able to understand and counter any logically possible attack. As the definition of omnipotence stipulates, if a being is able to accomplish anything logically possible, then he must be able to understand how to do anything. A being that is omnipotent in all worlds, that is, has omnipotence as an *N-property*, must also have omniscience as an *N-property*. Therefore, if a being is omnipotent then he must be omniscient as well.

So the Bowler, as well as a host of similar entities, does not exist in all possible worlds. In some worlds, beings that could create him refrained from doing so, in others, he was destroyed before achieving his status as the perfect Bowler and in still others, the very conditions needed for the Bowler to exist never arose. Thus as the Bowler does not exist in all possible worlds, he cannot be a necessary being.

In response to this one might say by definition the Bowler is necessary and thus cannot be created or destroyed. As discussed above, this overlooks the contingency of the Bowler's properties. That which is founded on contingent properties cannot be necessary. To say that something is necessary is not to weave a magic spell over it which makes it indestructible, like Superman. Something is necessary if, and only if, it cannot be destroyed by any logically possible means. Therefore, to be

necessary, it must be logically impossible for that thing to be destroyed in any possible world. An entity is not indestructible in all possible worlds because it is necessary. It is necessary because it (among other things) is indestructible in all possible worlds. This being the case, an entity can be necessary if, and only if, in all possible worlds there is nothing which can destroy it. Only the Greatest Possible Being is indestructible in all worlds.

So much for the analysis of allegedly necessary beings with a finite amount of power and other properties. If on the other hand, the allegedly necessary being has infinite power, then the objections outlined above will not work. It might be argued that entities like Tooley's omnipotent twisting wombat are unscathed by the kind of objections put forth above. Even though the Bowler might not exist, the omnipotent Bowler might, along with a whole zoo of similar entities. There are a number of responses that can be made to this.

Those who argue as does Tooley, on behalf of the existence of other omnipotent beings, must contend that if their arguments were successful, there must be an infinite number of omnipotent beings, including the GPB. Of course, they are not really arguing on behalf of these beings, rather, the argument is a *reductio ad absurdum* against the ontological argument. If the argument were to show that these various omnipotent beings exist, then there must be many omnipotent beings. This is where trouble begins. There has been some controversy about whether it is possible for there to be more than one omnipotent being.²² In the end, I suppose it depends upon how omnipotence is defined. The important point here is not the definition of omnipotence, but the definition of *sovereignty*. On this Richard Gale states:

It might be questioned why it is logically impossible for both God and the GCAD [greatest conceivable abstract demon or devil] to exist. It is not because there would exist two omnipotent beings, but rather because there would exist two sovereign beings. A sovereign being completely and uniquely determines every feature of any world in which it exists, which is such that it is logically consistent that this being completely and uniquely determines it. Thus, if two providential beings existed in any world, each would completely and uniquely determine everything in that world that it is consistent for either one of them alone to determine, thereby resulting in the contradiction that some things in this world both are and are not completely and uniquely determined by one of the two sovereign beings.²³

Another argument for the uniqueness of a sovereign being is the relation of any two beings in a world. One can conceive of a world with only two beings. These beings must be related in various ways; they must stand in comparison with one another. One must be larger than the other, for example, or more powerful, or redder etc. Whatever the relationship, there must be some standard by which they can be compared. In addition, if they interact there must be some way of determining the outcome of their actions. For example, suppose entity A wishes to create. Will B be able to block A's creative act, or act on the being created by A or, if B wishes to create will he have to use as much power as A, or a different

amount? Even if in some worlds the two entities do not interact at all, there are still worlds where they do, and there must be some accounting for why the interaction takes the form that it does.

The interaction between the two beings can either be guided by a law structure or not guided by a law structure. If it is not guided by some law structure, then the interaction between the two beings will be random and chaotic. It should be self-evident in such a case that none of the beings involved could be counted as sovereign. By definition, a sovereign being is able to control everything he wishes. To have one's actions and relations be random is obviously incompatible with the concept of a being in complete control of everything. On the other hand, let us suppose there is a law structure which guides the actions of the beings in some particular world. This law structure can either have its origin in one of the entities or not. If one of the entities has complete control over everything in the world it exists in, it is sovereign in that world. Let us suppose the law structure is not grounded in one of the entities, instead it is controlling all the beings, actions and relations in that world. In this case, none of the beings in that world could be sovereign as their actions and relations with the other beings would be determined by something, namely the law structure, outside of themselves. Therefore, no being would have complete control of what it could do, and this is incompatible with the concept of sovereignty. To be sovereign, a being must have complete control over everything in the worlds in which he exists. Consequently, the law structure of any world with a sovereign being in it must have its ground in that sovereign being.²⁴

Hence, there can only be one sovereign being. This simple statement has several implications. First, for a being to be the GPB, he must not only be omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent, etc., but also sovereign. A sovereign being has control over everything except his own nature and that which is entailed by the laws of logic. A being who is sovereign over everything seems obviously greater than one who is not. If a being existed who was not sovereign over everything, then it seems possible that there exist some beings, outside of his control which could thwart his will or even threaten his existence. A being whose will can be thwarted or existence threatened is not the Greatest Possible Being. Therefore, sovereignty must be included in the GPB's list of *N-properties*.

Second, a sovereign being must be omnipotent and omniscient in all respects. If a being did not have the power and knowledge to accomplish everything, then there would be things, entities and events outside of his control. As previously stated, a being who cannot control everything is not sovereign. Finally, the concept of sovereignty entails that a sovereign being must be sovereign in every world in which he exists and sovereign in all possible worlds as well.

As already discussed, a sovereign being must have the law structures of any worlds in which he exists grounded in himself. If a being does not exist in every possible world, then he exists in the worlds in which he does by chance, for no reason. Consequently, it is purely by accident that he has control over the law structure in the worlds where he exists. Even more important is the consideration that a truly sovereign being, who has total control over everything, will institute

whatever law structure he wills, and create any being he wishes. Were there anything outside of his control, he would by definition, not be sovereign. If a being did not exist in every possible world, he could not control which world was instantiated and therefore would not be sovereign. The fact that the world is instantiated would mean he did not create or control it. Thus, to be truly sovereign, a sovereign being must be logically necessary. If a being were not logically necessary then he could not be in 'back of every world' deciding which one was instantiated. This basic decision would be outside of his control. For these reasons, only a being which exists in all worlds and has total control over which world is instantiated can be sovereign.

To demonstrate this point, imagine there was some possible world W , and a reputedly sovereign being S , whom created another being C . One can coherently think of S as creating C , destroying C , moving or changing C in any manner chosen by S . In this case S is sovereign over C . However if S did not choose which W was to be the actual world, then S is not completely sovereign over C . In this case, *if S is not a logically necessary being*, S might have complete control over C , but would not have control over the fact he has complete control over C . The fact that he exists in a world in which he has complete control over C would not be in his control, and this would prevent him from being sovereign. In other worlds S would not have control over C . So the model where S is sovereign in some worlds but not in others is incoherent; to be sovereign a being needs to be sovereign and exist in all worlds.

Sovereignty also entails the fact that no material being can be sovereign. If one imagines some physical entity, say a rock, one can think of it as being so hard it would be indestructible in some world, while one can always conceive of another world where it can be destroyed. A rock, like all other material entities, must be composed of materials related to each other in a certain manner and regulated by the law structure of the world it exists in. For example, there are weak and strong forces which hold the nucleus together. In accordance with one law structure a rock may be indestructible, at least by any other physical object, but in another law structure it may be quite easily destroyed. The rock has no control over the law structure of the world in which it exists. Only a sovereign being, who is essentially omnipotent, can control the law structure of every world in which he exists and thus be immune to any possible destruction. However, if a being were essentially material, it would be composed of parts bound together according to some law structure. This law structure, say L , must either be grounded in something external or internal to the being. If external, the being could not be sovereign as we have seen above. If internal, the being would have to be the cause of himself, which is impossible. The reason for this is that the being could only exist in the manner it does because he was held together by the bonds which hold the matter of his body together, and these bonds would be governed by L . But the being would also have to be the cause of L . If this were the case the entity would be causing something to exist while the entity himself is dependent upon the thing it causes to exist for his own existence. As was shown in chapter two, this is clearly impossible. Thus, no

sovereign being can have 'being material' as an *E-property*. If essentially material entities cannot be sovereign, then the Bowler (and many other entities) cannot be sovereign, and consequently cannot be omnipotent or primary logically necessary beings. These entities may have De Dicto indestructibility, that is, be indestructible in some worlds, but they have no control over which world is the actual world. This argument can be formally stated as:

(4.17) Necessarily, every material being is governed by a law structure that describes the way the beings different spatio-temporal parts are related to, and interact with, each other and with other beings.

(4.18) Necessarily, this law structure is not analytic to the being itself, for necessarily, it is logically possible that any material being have its internal relations governed in different ways. Taken as matter *qua* matter, the laws governing any different material parts can have different law structures guiding them.

(4.19) This law structure is either grounded in (a) chance, (b) something external, or the material being itself.

(4.20) If (a), then this is the same as saying that there is no law structure. Something that has no law structure, that has no regularity in its internal relations, or has them for no reason, cannot be sovereign.

(4.21) If (b), then the being is governed by something else, and cannot, by definition be sovereign.

(4.22) If (c), then the object is the cause of its own existence, as it is dependent upon the law structure for its existence, yet is also the cause of the law structure.

(4.23) But nothing can be the cause of itself. And if it cannot exist, then obviously it cannot be a sovereign being.

(4.24) So no material being can be sovereign.

The only controversial claim might be (4.18). Yet this seems to be necessarily true as any material being must, naturally, be composed of matter. It is logically possible for any bit of matter in itself to be governed by different law structures. Since the being qua material being is composed of these bits of matter, it is dependent upon their properties. If they can be different, then it can be different. Even though any being is more than just its parts, a material being has no existence over and above its parts. If they are contingent, it is contingent. It is dependent upon them for its existence and properties. Thus, necessarily, any material being is governed by a law structure, and this law structure cannot be within its control, thereby preventing material beings from being sovereign. This analysis does not apply to immaterial beings, such as God, because they would not be composed of spatio-temporal parts. God has different *properties*, but not different *parts*, and all

of his internal properties are analytic to his nature.

Another argument which can be used against entities like the Bowler is that a logically necessary being, if he possibly exists, exists out of his own inner necessity. Because of this, he cannot be prevented by outside forces. He can only fail to exist because of some inner incoherence. In the case of the Bowler, there is ample reason to believe in his coherence, therefore his existence is impossible on both external and internal grounds. As stated above, the Bowler could be prevented by external forces because he is made up of contingent properties. Therefore, his internal coherence as a necessary being is impossible. Another point to be made is that the being who is the Bowler must necessarily be the Bowler; he cannot be any other. If he could, he could exist in some possible worlds as an entity other than the Bowler, and then the Bowler (meaning here not the person who is the Bowler, but the Bowler as an entity who bowls 300 games in every possible world) would not exist in all possible worlds, and thus would not be necessary. It seems impossible that there is a certain person, who necessarily is the Bowler in every possible world. Why couldn't there be a world where he is the Golfer? Again, only the GPB is a plausible candidate to be the Bowler, God could bowl a 300 game in every possible world if he so desired. For any being other than the GPB, it seems impossible that they necessarily be the Bowler in every possible world. (If one imagined that the Bowler could be different people in different worlds, one would have the problem of why it was necessarily true that every person who was the Bowler was so accidentally, and why there would necessarily be an entity who was the person he was in each world accidentally.)

In addition, the Bowler must have both *N-properties* and *C-properties*. Among his *N-properties* are personality and the ability to Bowl perfectly. Most of his other properties would be *C-properties*. These properties, height, weight, etc., would not be determined from the concept of the Bowler. They would be determined by external forces or by nothing at all. It is also true, as was demonstrated above, that the *N-properties* are dependent upon the *C-properties*; they could not exist without them. Therefore, the *N-properties* would be at the mercy of external forces; forces which are not necessary (unless the GPB causes the Bowler). This being the case, the Bowler is dependent upon the activity of outside contingent entities or forces for his existence in every world. This is incoherent because the *C-properties* of the Bowler are not analytic to the concept thereof. It is analytic that the Bowler have such properties as a certain weight, height etc. He would thus necessarily have certain properties in all worlds, but how those properties were actually instantiated would be contingent and would not have to exist. Contingent properties by nature, can take various forms or not exist at all. Thus, the Bowler might possibly have in some world a shape, (say for example he was crippled) that would prevent him from being the Bowler; being able to bowl 300. It is entailed by his nature as the Bowler that he have the proper shape etc., but because his nature is an abstraction and does not specify details, there is no link between it and the properties he actually has in a particular world. He is therefore externally dependent, meaning he is dependent upon other beings, or upon chance, for the exact nature of these properties. Again,

this leads us to the contradiction of a necessary being depending for his existence upon external contingent beings.

The case of the greatest possible Elvis impersonator (GPEI), who perfectly impersonates Elvis Presley in every world, is somewhat different. In this case, all of the attributes of the GPEI *would* be entailed by the concept of Elvis. Hence, all of the attributes would be necessary. However, there is another problem with the GPEI. By definition the GPEI impersonates Elvis in every possible world, but there are worlds where 'the King' doesn't exist. I strongly doubt anyone would say Elvis Presley was a necessary being. In the worlds where Elvis never existed, to impersonate him perfectly the GPEI would have to not exist, and therefore could not be a necessary being. It seems that no being who depends essentially for its definition and/or existence on contingent being(s) can be necessary.

We are finally in a position to deal with the objections made by Tooley and others which were listed at the beginning of the chapter. The universal solvent, as well as the green and red leprechauns, all fall prey to the same objections. In the case of the universal solvent and the universal insoluble one is faced with contradictory concepts. Beings which exemplify each of these properties cannot possibly co-exist. At most one can. Further, they could not co-exist with the GPB, for by definition the GPB is the cause of all other things. If the GPB can cause them, then he could cause them to be different than they are, or not to be at all. Several reasons exist why there could not be a solvent in all worlds. One is that the solvent and its abilities would be governed by a law structure over which it has no control. The solvent, being material, would have to have some specific law structure which bound its different parts together. Thus it would be at the mercy of something external to itself. The law structure would exist in the manner it does because of chance or because the GPB created it so.²⁵ In either event, there is no reason to think the law structure would be the same in all possible worlds. If this were the case, then the solvent would not have the property of being able to dissolve everything in all possible worlds, and would therefore not be the universal solvent.

Regarding Grim's Leprechauns, as well as many other similar creatures in the ontological zoo, it must be noted that in order for an ontological argument to work in showing the existence of any being, that being must be logically necessary. The ontological argument is based on the concept that if a being exists in every world, then it exists in the actual world. The Leprechauns have properties that do not seem to be *N-properties*, such as being red or green. These properties appear arbitrary. There seems to be no link between them and the concept of existing in all possible worlds. Hence, in accordance to (4.11) they are not necessary and consequently do not exist in every possible world. This leads us to conclude they do not exist in the actual world. 'Being red', for example, is not analytic to being a necessary being. Therefore, for any entity that was the red Leprechaun there are worlds where he is not red. The same could be said for all his other *C-properties*. Since his being is made up of *C-properties* with the *N-property* merely 'riding' on them, there are worlds in which he does not exist, and therefore contrary to Grim's definition, he cannot be a necessary being.

The demonological argument is a harder nut to crack. Tooley, as quoted above, states the ontological argument can give existence to the Devil as well as to God. Richard Gale previously postulated the existence of the GCAD, the greatest conceivable abstract demon or devil.²⁶ Michael Martin puts forth the concept of the absolute evil one.²⁷ The point is, one can posit the existence of a being who is identical with the GPB, except that instead of being purely good, he is purely evil. When considering the GCAD, who is so similar to the GPB, the question becomes are there any objections which render his existence impossible?

There are at least three objections of varying strength. First, if the Divine Command theory of ethics is true, then ethical values are dependent for their existence upon God's being. If this is true then God *cannot* be evil, for there is no autonomous standard of ethics by which he might be judged. Therefore, the GCAD could not be evil, for being the sovereign being, whatever his values are would be the 'correct' ones. Of course, atheists like Tooley, Gale and Martin are unlikely to accept the Divine Command theory. However, by putting forth the concept of the GCAD, they are postulating a concept wherein there is one sovereign being in all possible worlds, who is the cause of everything else that exists. This being's values are the 'highest' or most fundamental in every possible world. How can it then be maintained they are evil? For something to be evil, there must be some objective standard of ethics whereby the thing in question can be judged evil. Yet how can there be some objective standard of good and evil to judge the being which, by definition, is the source of everything else?

Second, the concept of the GCAD is that of an omnipotent, omniscient evil being. This is a being who knows everything, including the right and wise thing to do in every situation, and yet always chooses to do what is wrong. Human beings rarely do evil for the sake of evil, they do evil for the sake of some gain. However, the GCAD lacks for nothing, has nothing to fear from anything, and can accomplish anything he wants, yet always does evil out of the sheer love of evil. This seems impossible. In classical theism, the reason God created was not because of any need he had, but because of the overflowing of his own fullness. He was so rich that he created beings to share in his abundance. But to be evil is, by definition, to be lacking in virtue. How could there be a being (GCAD) who has all power and knowledge, who lacks for nothing, and yet is so disordered and perverse as to necessarily want to cause the maximum amount of evil and suffering when it does not benefit him to do so?

The final objection is the GPB is said to exist in every world because, by definition, he lacks no great-making qualities, and thus exists in with maximal excellence in every possible world. This argument can be formally stated as:

(4.25) The GPB has all relevant great-making properties.

One cannot apply this argument to the GCAD. To show this, substitute the GCAD for the GPB.

(4.26) The GCAD has all relevant great-making properties.

Obviously, (4.26) is false. Evil is not a relevant great-making property while perfect goodness is. Therefore, the GCAD does not have all relevant great-making properties. If he lacks one then it is not analytic to his nature that he have all great-making properties, therefore he will lack others in different possible worlds as there is no reason he would have the other great-making properties.²⁸ One cannot be a necessary being by chance. Thus, the concept of the GCAD is shown to be incoherent and the most powerful rival to the GPB fails.

The above conclusion provides a means for dealing with the De Dicto objection to the classical concept of God. This objection states although there may be a God in every possible world, there may be different Gods in the different possible worlds, even though in every other respect they all have all the properties of the God of classical theism. For example, Yahweh may be God in *W*, while Zeus may be God in *W'*. Since, in this model, none of the Gods exists in all possible worlds, none of them have all great-making properties. If this is true then no reason exists why there should be a God in all possible worlds, and therefore this model is incoherent. Analogously, suppose there are two machines, one a De Re machine and the other a De Dicto machine. The De Re machine produces a ball when a button is pushed. With this machine, it is always the same ball, because the construction of the machine only allows it to select that particular ball. The De Dicto machine is different. This machine is full of balls, indeed, it has an infinite number of them. It pulls balls at random; which ball is picked is a matter of chance. However, it will always pick one ball.

These machines are somewhat analogous to the De Re and De Dicto concepts of God. In the De Re machine the one ball that was picked would have to be in total control of the machine, and indeed of the laws of physics that governed the machine. In the De Dicto machine, one ball will necessarily be picked. When considering God there is no 'machinery' which will necessitate that there will be a God in every world. The 'machinery' which necessitates that the De Re God exist is that he is the GPB, and it is analytic to his nature that he exist in every possible world. But this logic will not work with the De Dicto Gods. For none of them are the GPB, and thus none of them need have all relevant perfections intrinsic to their nature. Therefore, none of them will be necessary. It is the nature of the individual who is necessarily the GPB which entails his necessary existence, not the mere concept of the GPB which entails that he exist. Unlike the De Dicto machine, which always picks one ball, this model has nothing to make a God exist in every world. Further, there is no other kind of 'machinery' which will do the job. By definition, nothing can cause the existence of God. Therefore, none of the individuals who are De Dicto Gods in some worlds have anything in their character which would ensure that they or some other individual would be God in all possible worlds.

Tooley's last argument is the relative-maximal property argument which may be disposed of rather quickly. The application of (4.11) disposes of omnipotent,

omniscient, morally perfect wombats (OTW) doing the twist at the top of Tooley's page. Based on the above text it simply is not reasonable to believe that such entities could exist. It seems obviously impossible for any wombat to be omnipotent in all possible worlds. There is no link between omnipotence and being a wombat. The concept of being a wombat is not analytic to the concept of omnipotence. It would seem that the only way to save the OTW is to think of it as the greatest possible OTW, but this falls prey to, among other objections, the greatest possible island objection. Therefore, the OTW is impossible.

It is apparent that being an essentially material being, the OTW cannot be omnipotent or sovereign. If this is true then the OTW cannot be a primary necessary being. It might be objected that perhaps a sovereign being could *incarnate himself* as an OTW.²⁹ This may be true, (though why a sovereign being would want to incarnate himself as an OTW is another question), but this in no way helps Tooley's argument. In this case, what is omnipotent is the original being of the sovereign being, to which the OTW is only added on. The OTW would not be contrary to what it is called, omnipotent. The twisting wombat would merely be added on in some way to the sovereign being. Even if the twisting wombat was the same person as the sovereign being who incarnates himself, the omnipotence would be a property belonging to his original sovereign, immaterial nature, and not to the wombat.

Finally, contrary to what Tooley writes, his argument is not really parallel to Plantinga's. Plantinga's argument to the GPB is not a relative maximal argument. Instead, it is an argument which depends upon the greatness of God, who is defined as being so great that he exists in all possible worlds. The existence of Tooley's OTW on the other hand, depends upon Tooley's page being in existence. Since Tooley does not define his page as a necessary being then one can say it does not exist in all possible worlds. If it does not exist in all worlds, then the OTW need not either. As Tooley's page loses its claim as a necessary being, and since there is no necessity in the relative-maximal relationship, then there is no reason to think the OTW exists. OTWs are not analytic to Tooley's page and neither is Tooley's page analytic to OTWs. Any relation between the two is purely contingent (not to mention ridiculous), and thus the relative-maximal property as a necessary relation cannot exist. Hence, there is no reason for the OTW to exist.

The arguments supporting the entire ontological zoo of weird allegedly necessary beings fail. However, one must still consider the coherence of the concept of the GPB. Richard Gale and Michael Martin³⁰ have written detailed criticisms on the concept of God in recent years. In the second half of this book a strong argument will be made for the existence of the GPB, this will justify why arguments against the GPB fail. If for an *X*, there are strong arguments that *X* exists, then there are also strong reasons for thinking the concept of *X* is coherent and any arguments against the coherence of *X* must fail. Chapter ten will provide a detailed examination of alleged inconsistencies in the concept of God.

Richard Gale presents another argument against the concept of the GPB which will now be examined. After discussing the definition of omnipotence, Gale arrives

at this definition of the concept:

(4.27) For any proposition *p*, if it is logically possible that God bring it about that *p* as well as any proposition that is coreporting with *p*, then God can bring it about that *p*.³¹

Gale believes this successfully refutes various attacks which have been raised about the concept of omnipotence. Gale states:

Let Pinrod be a possible being who has only one of the divine perfections—omnipotence—and thereby does not qualify as an absolutely perfect being. Anything that God can do or bring about, our Pinrod can do or bring about, and then some. Not being burdened with being absolutely perfect, our Pinrod, in addition to having all of God's powers, for instance, being able to create a universe *ex nihilo* and perform other parlor tricks, can be possessed of a body and thereby be able to play football. Since he is not absolutely perfect, he is not barred from committing suicide. Furthermore, since he lacks benevolence, he is able to perform an immoral action.³²

Gale's point is that God is supposedly a perfect being, not lacking in any powers, yet here it can be seen that there is a being who can do things which God cannot. This, he thinks, is incompatible with perfect being theology. Thus, Gale believes the concept of God as a perfect being is incoherent.

As was argued at length above, Pinrod is really an impossible being. There can be no being who is omnipotent, and yet is essentially embodied. Omnipotence is not something one can just 'tack' on any being one desires. To be plausible in positing it to a being, one must show it is analytic to that being. For a finite being like Pinrod, omnipotence is an attribute which is incompatible with what else is said of him. In addition, it must be asked if the inability to do things, such as commit suicide or behave in an immoral manner, are weaknesses in God. It will be argued here that it is not.

Why can't God play football? The answer to this is because he is essentially disembodied. God could, if he wished, become incarnate and play football, but even in this case he could never play football in his essential being. In order to play football one must be material, and God cannot be essentially material, therefore he cannot play football. One should use this example to examine the nature of what it is to be a perfect being. Existing as an omnipotent and sovereign perfect being does not entail being able to do anything. It entails the ability to do those things which are consistent with existing as a necessary, spiritual, sovereign being. It is not an imperfection in God that he is unable to do things which one necessarily has to be embodied to do.

Similarly, it is no weakness in the GPB that he is unable to commit suicide. Existing as a necessary being entails existing in all possible worlds. If the GPB committed suicide then there would be worlds in which he did not exist. Thus the ability to commit suicide is inconsistent with his existing as a necessary, sovereign being. It would be a contradiction if he could. Further, it is no weakness in him

that he cannot perform an immoral action. First, as was suggested in the discussion of the GCAD, if God exists then it would seem his value system is the ultimate in all possible worlds. If this is true, then one cannot conceive of there being objective ethical values that are superior to his, in the sense of his being subject to them. Therefore, it is dubious he could perform an immoral act for, by definition, whatever he does is right. Further, apart from those considerations, the inability to be immoral is not a weakness. It is not a question of power. God is obviously powerful enough to commit an immoral act. If he wanted to knock over a liquor store, no one could stop him. It is not that God *could* not perform an immoral act, it is that he *would* not perform an immoral act. The difference between could and would is crucial. It is not an inability, such as lack of power that prevents God from performing immoral actions, on the contrary it is a great-making power, that of perfect goodness, that he would never perform an immoral action. Thus, Gale's arguments fail.

This leaves us with only one candidate for existing as a primary necessary being, that of the GPB. All others fail. As should now be apparent, the farther the concept of one of these alternate beings is 'away' from the concept of the GPB, that is, the more differences there are, the more objections can be lodged against that concept. Conversely, as previous stated, the closer the concept is to that of the GPB, the fewer the objections which can be successfully lodged against it. Schopenhauer writes:

On some occasion or other, some one excogitates a conception, composed out of all sorts of predicates, among which however, he takes care to include the predicate actuality or existence, either openly stated or wrapped up for decency's sake in some other predicate, such as perfection, immensity or something of that kind. . . . Accordingly the predicate reality or existence is now extracted from this arbitrarily thought conception, and an object corresponding to it is forthwith presumed to have real existence independently of the conception.³³

This argument is *not* applicable to the GPB, but *is* applicable to the concepts of the OTW, the Bowler, the red and green leprechauns, etc.

As important as these objections have been, they are not the only ones which have been used against the modal ontological argument. There is in fact another one of great importance. Tooley defends this objection³⁴ as do, in different ways, R. Kane,³⁵ Brian Leftow,³⁶ and Richard Gale.³⁷ There are two basic versions of this argument. Both versions have to do with beings or states of affairs that seem logically possible, but whose existence is logically incompatible with that of the GPB. One version has already indirectly been dealt and is argued by R. Kane. Kane writes there are conceivably such things as LPN's, or 'less than perfect necessary beings'. He argues that unless one cannot eliminate the possibility of these beings, one generates a contradiction with classical theism. He writes:

(4.28) God is the First Cause of all things, (in the sense that the existence of other

things depends upon God's will or action).

(4.29) The B-Principle $[MLp \rightarrow p]$ is true (at least for **notions of necessity applicable** in traditional theological contexts).

(4.30) A perfect being is logically possible.

(4.31) LPN's are logically possible.³⁸

To avoid a contradiction, Kane believes one of these must be false. Dismissing (4.31) will save classical theism, but Kane is unaware of any argument against the LPNs. However, as stated above, there are strong arguments which show the incoherence of any kind of concrete, primary LPN. Therefore, classical theism is saved from the aforementioned contradiction.

However, there is another version of this argument which is not answered in the previous text. To quote Tooley, "Similarly, the statement 'there is no maximally *excellent* being' is a nonmodal sentence; so unless it can be shown to entail a contradiction, one is justified in concluding that there is a possible world in which it is true. And it will then follow that the property of maximal greatness is not capable of being exemplified."³⁹

Tooley's statement can be listed as:

(4.32) There is no maximally excellent being.

Remember, a maximally excellent being is a being who is **omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect** in one world, while a maximally great being is a being who is maximally excellent in all possible worlds. Let us then say:

(4.33) A maximally great being is possibly instantiated.

It can be shown that (4.32) contradicts (4.33). For a maximally great being to exist, it must exist in all possible worlds. If it exists in all possible worlds, then there is no possible world wherein it does not exist. If this true, then there is no possible world where a maximally excellent being does not exist. So one must choose between (4.32) and (4.33). This does not prove Tooley wrong, however in order for him to think (4.32) is true, then he must also think (4.33) is false. For (4.33) to be false, the concept of a maximally great being, (the GPB) must be self-contradictory. The only thing that can prevent the existence of a maximally great being is internal incoherence because, by definition, no other being could prevent a maximally great being from coming into existence, or destroy it, and it could not exist for no reason at all. Similarly, for (4.32) to be true, then the concept of a maximally excellent being must be contradictory, for the same reasons as those stated for (4.33). Therefore, either (4.32) or (4.33) entails a contradiction, and without further analysis a determination cannot be made. This, however does not

mean the two are logically equivalent. To be justified in the belief that (4.33) is true, one must examine the concept of the GPB. If one cannot find a contradiction, then the belief that the GPB exists is validated. On the other hand, the only way one could justifiably say (4.32) is true, is to investigate the concept of the GPB and find some sort of incoherence. Therefore, the truth of both (4.32) and (4.33) depend upon the coherence of the concept of the GPB. The lack of incoherence in the GPB is evidence for (4.33), while the discovery of incoherence in the GPB is evidence for (4.32).

Tooley's argument can be rephrased to make his objection more powerful.

(4.34) It is possible that there is no maximally excellent being.⁴⁰

(4.34) is equivalent to saying that in some possible world, there is no maximally excellent being, which contradicts (4.33). Therefore, (4.34) could be believed without examining the concept of the GPB to see if it is incoherent. One would just examine the concept of maximal excellence to see if it could fail to be instantiated--just as one might examine the concept of 'dog' to see if it could fail to be instantiated. So to have evidence for (4.34), one doesn't need 'some reason to think that the concept of the GPB is incoherent'. All one needs is a reason to think that (4.34) is true because it *seems* possible for maximal excellence to fail to be instantiated.

Richard Gale reiterates this arguments as:

(4.35) There is a possible world in which the property of being a morally unjustified evil is instantiated.⁴¹

Taking this with the plausible premise that the God of classical theism would not allow any evil which was morally unjustified to exist in any world in which he exists, then if (4.35) is correct, the GPB does not exist. If (4.35) is true, and it looks as though it is, then (4.33) is false. It is easy to conceive of there being some evil that was morally unjustified; had no good purpose whatsoever. Not only does this seem possible, but there seem to be examples of morally justified evil in the actual world. It can of course be argued this is only apparent, that in fact these evils have a purpose. However even if this is the case, it still seems *possible* that morally unjustified evil exists.

Finally, it has been suggested⁴² that there is a world in which nothing exists. Simply put:

(4.36) There is a possible world where nothing exists.

This concept has already been discussed, however a different viewpoint is now being examined. Intuitively, it is as easy to believe there is a world where nothing exists, as it is to believe there is a GPB, or a being with maximal greatness, in every possible world.

The basic point being made is all one has to do is conceive of some world which is incompatible with the existence of the GPB, and then compare intuitions. On the surface it can be argued that there is a possible world in which unjustified evil exists and is intuitively more likely to be instantiated than a possible world in which maximal greatness exists and is instantiated. Gale argues this at length.⁴³ After all, unjustified evil is easily imagined, while the concept of the GPB or God, the greatest possible being, is difficult to conceive. By definition, God is incomprehensible, therefore he cannot be entirely understood. Hence, as far as our *prima facie* intuitions go, it is easier to conceive of a world without God, or a totally unjustified evil, or a world where nothing exists, than it is to conceive of the GPB. It could be argued that the ontological argument does not give us a reason to believe in God, in fact it gives us a reason not to. The belief that (4.34), (4.35) or (4.36) could possibly be true is all that is needed for the GPB's existence to be impossible.

I consider this to be the strongest of the objections to the modal ontological argument. However, it will be demonstrated that these arguments fail. If one were to ask whether it is possible for there to be a world where maximal excellence is uninstantiated, all will agree there is. By definition, if one says a being with maximal excellence exists in just one world, then it would seem that there are worlds in which he does not exist. Therefore, if one defines the being with maximal excellence as a logically contingent being, then there are possible worlds where he is non-existent.

However, if one were to ask if the being with maximal excellence is also a being with maximal greatness, then a different story arises. If the being with maximal excellence is also the GPB, then (4.34) for example, is impossible. In this case, every world must have a being with maximal excellence (and also maximal greatness). Therefore, if (4.34) is indeed possible, then (4.33) is impossible. Consequently the same analysis could be made for (4.35) and (4.33), and (4.36) and (4.33).

It is at this point a crucial distinction must be made. The GPB is an object, while a world without the GPB existing in it, is a possible world. For this possible world to *be* a possible world, all objects existing in it must be possible, while any objects not existing must not be necessary. To judge if a possible world is possible, one must first determine if it is feasible for any object in it not to exist. To determine if a possible world with round squares in it is possible, one must first judge whether it is feasible for round squares to exist at all. When considering the GPB the only way this object could fail to exist is through internal incoherence. The GPB cannot, by definition, fail to exist by chance or because his existence was prevented by some other being or beings. Thus, to see if (4.34) is possible one must first see if it is possible for the GPB not to exist, which is an identical procedure for checking (4.33). Hence, (4.33) has epistemic priority. Beings are more fundamental than worlds because worlds, are in part, composed of beings. In order for a world to be possible, all of the objects or beings which exist in it must be able to exist. A world that has a trillion entities all of which were possible, yet had one round square in it, would not be a possible world.

Therefore, to determine if (4.33) is true, one must examine the internal coherence of the concept of the GPB. To determine the truth of (4.34) one must be able to conceive that there cannot be a being with maximal excellence in some world, and for there to be a world without a being with maximal excellence, there cannot be a GPB. Suppose that numbers exist, that is, that one takes a realist position on numbers. Let us also try to think of a world where all numbers exist except for the number two. To determine if such a world were possible, one would have to discover if it were feasible for the number two not to be a necessary being. For if the number two is a necessary being, then a world such as the one described above is impossible. To determine if the number two is necessary, one would have to examine the concept of the number two; other beings would not effect its necessity. Therefore, the number two would have epistemic priority over a world where it supposedly did not exist.

One must now turn to the coherence of the GPB. Again, (4.33) is still the primary concept over (4.34). If one were to examine (4.33) through the coherence of (4.34), one would run into a problem. If (4.34) is true, then (4.33) is false. To judge if (4.34) is true, one must first determine if a world can exist without a being with maximal excellence, and then determine if there are beings with maximal greatness, which is (4.33). However to examine (4.33), all one can do is examine the internal coherence of the GPB, which again is (4.33).

What these premises are appealing to is not intuition, but rather our ability to find contradictions in the concept of the GPB. This involves logical analysis, not intuition. If no contradiction can be found in the concept of the GPB, then there is good reason to believe the concept of the GPB is coherent. Hence, if the concept of the GPB is coherent, then the GPB exists. (4.33) has epistemic priority over (4.34), etc. because our knowledge of them ultimately comes down to checking the internal coherence of the GPB.

The argument which refutes (4.34) also, as previously stated, refutes (4.35) and (4.36). Although it certainly seems intuitively plausible that there is a world where moral evil exists and is totally unjustifiable, when it comes to logical analysis, to judge if these worlds can really exist, one must first move to the concept of the GPB. As argued in chapter three, one can intuitively think that something is logically contingent when in fact it is logically necessary. The Tooley and Gale type arguments ultimately fail on these two points. Whether the GPB exists or not depends *only* upon his internal coherence, and for a world to be possible, all of the objects in it have to be possible.

Peter Van Inwagen⁴⁴ has made other criticisms against this version of the ontological argument. Van Inwagen begins by defining what he calls the simplest possible ontic argument. He believes there is a being who displays both *N* and *C* properties, that is, both necessary and concrete properties. He continues by stating one cannot show that there is a being with both properties because one cannot point to any such being. He further states any attempt to imagine them, either necessarily compatible or incompatible, is beyond our mental powers. Let us then say (*N,C*) means there exists a concrete being that is necessary, or, that there is a necessary

concrete being. Consider:

(4.37) A necessary concrete being exists.

(4.38) A necessary, concrete, omnipotent, omniscient, morally perfect being exists.

Van Inwagen's basic argument is if one cannot tell (4.37) is true than there appears to be no way one can tell if (4.38) is true. After all, (4.38) is analytic to (4.37). Consequently, if it is impossible to prove (4.37), then it must be impossible to prove (4.38), which contains more elements than the simpler (4.37).

To demonstrate Van Inwagen's meaning when he writes that discovering the truth about (4.37) is beyond our powers, we will examine one of his examples. He states:

In fact, the 'try to imagine it' test for possibility is useless. I can *imagine* what it would be like to discover the '7777' occurs in the decimal expansion of pi, but this feat of imagining would not support the hypothesis that such a discovery is possible.⁴⁵

Just the conception that the sequence of '7777' exists somewhere in the decimal expansion of pi gives one no grounds for thinking it really exists. One can conceive of it as existing, but that is no indication that it really does exist. If one cannot discover by thinking about them whether or not things like the existence of the decimal expansion of pi is necessary or impossible, then it can be assumed one cannot see the truth of (4.37) or (4.38) just by thinking about them. Since the initial premise in the modal ontological argument is that a maximally great being is possible in the broadly logical sense, then the inability to see this is true, leaves us without a crucial premise. Without the premise (4.33), for example, the ontological argument fails. Van Inwagen's argument can be stated as:

(4.39) For any P and Q , and if Q is analytic to P , then, if one cannot tell if Q is true, then one cannot tell if P is true.

(4.40) (4.37) is analytic to (4.38).

(4.41) If one cannot tell that (4.37) is true, then one cannot tell whether (4.38) is true.

(4.42) One cannot tell if (4.37) is true.

(4.43) Therefore, one cannot tell if (4.38) is true.

Contrary to Van Inwagen, (4.37) is harder to evaluate, that is, to determine whether there is an entity which has the properties of being both concrete and necessary, than (4.38). As is often the case it is easier to evaluate something about which more information is known. Therefore, it is more difficult to determine if (4.37) is coherent than it is (4.38). To give an example of this let us assume that omniscience and omnipotence are contradictory and cannot both be possessed by

the same entity. If this were true, it would demonstrate the incoherence of (4.38), and not (4.37), at least not immediately. All of this relates to (4.37). Considering the above (4.41) seems false. The inability to determine the truth of (4.37) should not preclude one from determining the truth of (4.38). One may be able to judge the truth or falsity of (4.42) but not have enough information to discover the truth or falsity of (4.37). Indeed, I believe this is actually the case.

Van Inwagen believes that showing the consistency of the properties listed in (4.38) would only show "there exists a necessary being who *might be* omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect."⁴⁶ The primary premise of the modal ontological argument is, "[T]here is a possible world in which there is a maximally great being." A maximally great being necessarily has all of his great-making properties in all possible worlds. The more information one knows about an object the easier it is to determine if its existence is impossible. In answer to Van Inwagen's other objection about the coherence of the necessity of (4.38), a maximally great being has all of its great-making properties as *N-properties*.

Van Inwagen's first argument that one cannot tell just by thinking about something whether or not it's possible bears some similarity to Hume's attack on the logically necessary being which was used in chapter two. However, used in the manner which Van Inwagen wishes to use it, the argument seems to fail as the analogy is not exact.

In considering Van Inwagen's example of whether or not '7777' is contained somewhere in the decimal expansion of pi, one can either conceive of '7777' being in the expansion of pi or not. Just conceiving these alternatives does not tell us which of them is true, even though one of them must be. Analogously, Van Inwagen tells us that the two propositions, 'There is a possible world in which a maximally great being exists' and 'There is no possible world in which a maximally great being exists', are both conceivable, but it is impossible to discover which is true just by our powers of conceptualization. This is true even though one of these statements is necessarily true and the other is necessarily false. Is the case of the GPB truly the same as the case of '7777' being in the expansion of pi?

My answer is no, although I do not deny there are some elements in the two examples which are analogous to each other, e.g., in both cases one of the propositions is necessarily true and the other necessarily false. However, there is also at least one significant element of disanalogy. The disanalogy is that in the case of '7777' being in the expansion of pi, what is being done is an attempt to determine if any part of an infinite string of numbers has a particular pattern; '7777' existing in it or not. There is nothing intrinsically contradictory about '7777'. The question becomes whether or not '7777' exists in this system of numbers.

The fact that '7777' is not internally contradictory is the reason why one cannot tell if it exists in the decimal expansion of pi. One cannot 'see' the whole system of numbers to which it would belong and which would determine whether it existed there or not. Hence, there is no way one can tell, just by attempting to conceive it, whether '7777' exists in the decimal expansion of pi. No reason exists to suppose the theory that there is a sequence of '7777' is preferred to the theory that there is

no sequence of '7777', and vice versa. Epistemically, they are on exactly the same level. (Of course, if one did some computer operations to figure out the decimal expansion of pi, and at 100,000,000 numbers found '7777', then that would be a good reason to think it existed. However, here we are comparing things from an *a priori* standpoint.)

When dealing with the concept of the existence of a being exemplifying maximal greatness the situation is different. 'Is the concept of the GPB coherent or incoherent?' One is given a description of a certain being, the one exemplifying maximal greatness, and asked to consider whether or not it is coherent. The more properties attributed as necessary to the exemplification of this being, the sooner one can reach a conclusion as to whether or not his existence is possible or impossible. The contention being maintained is that the more information one knows about a concept, and if one discovers no impossibility in it, the more justification one has for thinking that concept can possibly exist. If one is considering the concept of a being with maximal greatness and one thinks that such a being has the properties of necessity (omnipotence, omniscience and perfect goodness) then one has some 'material to work with'. If one detects some incoherence, some self-contradiction in the concept of such a being, then one has good reason to think that such a being cannot exist.

If, on the other hand, one examines the concept of such a being to the best of one's abilities and discovers no incoherence, no contradiction, then one has at least some reason for thinking such a being is possible. The two situational problems revolving around the decimal expansion of pi and the existence of a being with maximal greatness are not the same. In the case of the decimal expansion of pi, both the existence of '7777' and the non-existence of '7777' seem equally coherent. One can conceive either one of them being true. The only way one could 'see' which one was necessary and which one was impossible would be to grasp the series as a whole; a function human beings cannot do. If one had omniscience, one could 'see' the whole series and the necessity of all the relationships between the numbers. One could 'see' that either '7777' or not '7777' was necessary. However, when considering this independent from the knowledge of the whole series of the decimal expansion of pi, all one can 'see' is '7777' and not '7777' are both coherent. There is therefore a symmetry between '7777' and not '7777'. It is my contention that this same analogy cannot be applied to the GPB, as the symmetry of the existence or non-existence of '7777' in the decimal expansion of pi does not exist. One can conceive of the GPB not existing but this does not, in itself, provide a reason to think that the GPB does not exist. Only the discovery of some incoherence in the concept of the GPB is reason to believe he does not exist.

The proposition expressed by (4.34), that a world containing no being with maximal excellence exists, is logically dependent upon the inner coherence of a being with maximal greatness. The existence or non-existence of a being exemplifying maximal greatness is entirely dependent upon his own possibility. A being with maximal greatness cannot just 'happen' or 'fail to happen', as then he would not be necessary. He must be an independent being, uncausable, and

unpreventable by anything else.⁴⁷ The only way he can fail to exist is by his own internal incoherence. Thus, one comes to the same conclusion as previously stated, that the proposition 'a world exists where there is no being exemplifying maximal excellence' is true or false depending on whether the concept of the being exemplifying maximal greatness is possible in the broadly logical sense. Van Inwagen's argument is refuted because it rests on a false analogy, and ultimately it can be refuted by the same answer given to Tooley and Gale.

J. William Forge tends the following argument. He offers a very simple version of the modal ontological argument which he entitles *A*:

(4.44) God, (a being who is divine in all possible worlds), is possible.

(4.45) Therefore, God actually exists.⁴⁸

This is followed by another argument, *B*, which reads:

(4.46) God (a being who is divine in α) is possible.

(4.47) Therefore, (such a) God exists in α .⁴⁹

In other words, *A* states there is a divine being in all possible worlds and therefore in the actual world. While *B* states there is possibly a divine being in all possible worlds, and therefore such a being possibly exists in the actual world α .

Forge attacks the rationality of *B* with the following argument, "Stripped of any a priori access to the premise she [the evaluator of *B*] is unable to assess that premise without first assessing the conclusion."⁵⁰ In short, one cannot tell whether (4.47) is true without the ability to examine (4.46). Forge maintains there are such things as α indexed properties. These are properties which are exemplified in the actual world α . To determine the truth of a α -indexed property one must first "determine whether the α -indexed property is possibly exemplified by seeing whether the non-indexed counter-part of that property, . . . is actually exemplified."⁵¹ In the example supplied by Forge, one determines there is a possibility of a α -indexed property being the integer square root of 17,161 by first determining that this property is actually exemplified. That is, one must first assess if it is actually true that this square root exists before one is entitled to say it is possibly exemplified in α .

Next Forge argues that the property of being an integer square root of 17,161 is what I call an *N-property*, so the fact that this property is α -indexed or true in α , is unnecessary. The non-indexed property and the α -indexed property are necessarily co-extensive in all possible worlds.⁵² Because of this, in cases where the truth of "a property whose possible exemplification can be known a priori leaves us with a α -indexed property whose possible exemplification can be determined a priori."⁵³ In other cases where one is dealing with what I call *C-properties*, the α concept does not automatically apply. For example, Forge gives the case of "being 9 and

in α , the number of planets.”⁵⁴ Here, adding the α -indexed property means that the truth of the whole proposition cannot be known *a priori*, but rather is *a posteriori*. In cases where the α -indexed property is not necessarily co-extensive with its non-indexed counterpart, the determination of the possible exemplification of the α -indexed properties is necessarily *a posteriori*.⁵⁵ In conclusion, Forgie denies that the property of ‘being divine’ is necessarily co-extensive with the α -indexed property of ‘being divine in α ’. He asserts, quoting from Plantinga, that even if there is some possible world W , where there is a divine being who exists in all possible worlds, it does not follow that this being exists as a divine being in all possible worlds.⁵⁶ Hence, even if there are possible worlds where there is a divine being, it does not follow, states Forgie, that it is an *a priori* issue that there is a divine being α , in the actual world. This can only be known *a posteriori*.

The simplest way to respond to this argument is to say Forgie does not understand the nature of the divine being. For as argued earlier, the divine being, the GPB, is a being who, if he exists at all, must exist as the GPB in all possible worlds. That is, in the case of the GPB, the α is idle, as it was in the case of the integer prime of 17,161. Both are necessary properties. Whether the GPB exists is, in terms of ontology, entirely an internal matter depending solely upon the coherence of the concept. Epistemically, it depends solely upon one’s ability to comprehend the concept of the GPB and recognize any contradictions. Forgie’s argument against *B* collapses once it is recognized that the possibility of the GPB entails his necessary existence, and thus his existence in the actual world. Of course, in doing so one is bringing in all possible worlds and moving from *B* to *A*.

In the case of *A*, which is a simplified version of the modal ontological argument, Forgie maintains the same problem occurs. He writes:

What about argument *A*? Here the property “being divine” is indexed not only to α but to all possible worlds. The possibility premise of Argument *A*, premise (4.46), states that ‘being divine in α ’ and ‘being divine in all worlds distinct from α ’ are possibly coexemplified. Thus (4.46) entails (4.44). So we cannot determine *a priori* that (4.46) is rational. If we could, then by simple deduction we could also determine *a priori* that (4.44) is rational. But as was just argued, the rationality of (4.44) is not an *a priori* matter.

Since part of the content of (4.46) is the *a posteriori* claim made by (4.44), one trying to assess the rationality of the former is, at a minimum, going to have to employ the *a posteriori* procedures relevant in assessing the latter. A typical inquirer has no recourse but to turn his attention to α itself and determine *a posteriori* whether it is rational to suppose α contains a being who is divine. But even this is not enough. He will also have to determine that it is rational to suppose that such a being is divine in all worlds distinct from α . But that is to say that determining the rationality of premise (4.46) requires first determining that it is rational to suppose that God (as conceived by argument *A*) actually exists. Determining the rationality of Argument *A*’s conclusion will not be a consequence of, but rather a means to, seeing the rationality of its possibility premise. So for our typical inquirer, argument *A* will not establish the rationality of belief in God.⁵⁷

Since the rationality of belief in the premise depends upon the rationality of belief in the conclusion, one cannot argue to the conclusion from the premise. This is an epistemic problem, not a logical one, as Forgie points out.⁵⁸ All arguments in which the conclusion necessarily results from the premise are arguments where, in a logical sense, the truth of the premise depends upon the truth of the conclusion. Instead, Forgie is arguing one can only know the truth of the premise if one knows the conclusion is true. This scenario is viciously circular.

However, Forgie is mistaken. When considering the ontological argument, one knows God exists in the actual world by contemplating the concept of God. For as argued above, (4.46) can be known a priori if one takes some additional steps. By splitting the ontological argument in two, as Forgie has done, things become confused. If one asserts that being divine is equivalent to being the GPB, then one is essentially stating (4.46), and as a result is expressing one of two different things. First, there is a being who is divine in the actual world. Second, there is possibly a divine being in the actual world. In the first interpretation, there is a divine being in the actual world, one can conclude that (4.47) is true, indeed, is tautological. In the second interpretation (which is Forgie's), there is a possible world *W* where a divine being exists and also exists as divine in the actual world, the truth of (4.47) depends upon whether there is a possible world where there is a being who exists as a divine being in the actual world. For this to be possible God must exist as God in the actual world. However, as I have argued, the a priori way to know if God exists is if he exists in any possible world, from which it necessarily follows that he exists in all. After all, the direction of the ontological argument does not support one investigating every possible world (including the actual one), seeing if God exists in each one, and then generalizing to the conclusion that he therefore exists in every world. Rather the logic of the argument flows in the opposite direction.

If God is defined as a being who exists in all possible worlds, then in some sense he is dependent upon his existing in every world. Therefore, from an epistemic standpoint, one does not have to investigate the possible worlds, (including the actual world in some a posteriori manner), to see that God exists. Rather, due to his absolute ontological independence, one need only consider God and his nature. While is it ontologically true that God must exist in the actual world if he is to exist in all worlds, epistemically, there is no necessity in first discovering he exists in the actual world before one can learn he exists in all worlds. One can 'see' that $2 + 2 = 4$ is necessarily true in all worlds, before one does inductive arguments to show it is true in the actual world. Similarly, if one finds necessity intrinsic to the concept of God, one could know that God exists in the actual world before one learns of his existence in some other manner. As previously argued, when examining the question of God's existence, all factors other than God's nature are irrelevant. Nothing external can affect his existence or non-existence. Therefore, to understand that (4.50) is true, one must know that God exists in the actual world, and to know this (if one is using the ontological argument) one must know that he exists in all worlds, and this is based on the knowledge that his concept is coherent. By splitting up the ontological argument, Forgie disrupts the proper order of argument, and thus

understandably the argument becomes invalid.

James Sennett makes an additional criticism of Plantinga's version of the ontological argument. The exact form of the argument which he attacks (there have been several different formulations) is named argument *A* and is as follows:

(4.48) There is a possible world in which unsurpassable greatness is exemplified.

(4.49) The proposition *a thing has unsurpassable greatness if and only if it has maximal excellence in every possible world* is necessarily true.

(4.50) The proposition *whatever has maximal excellence is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect* is necessarily true.

Therefore,

(4.51) There actually exists a being who is **omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect**, and has these properties in every world.⁵⁹

Sennett's criticism of the above is basically:

(4.52) One can understand (4.48) only if one understands it to entail (4.51).

(4.53) To constitute a good reason for its conclusion, an argument must be such **that** one can justifiably believe all the premises without understanding them to **entail the conclusion**.

Therefore,

(4.54) Argument *A* cannot be a good reason for (4.51).⁶⁰

One can know there is a possible world where unsurpassable greatness (or the GPB) is instantiated if and only if one knows it exists in all possible worlds. However, that it exists in all possible worlds is the conclusion of the argument. Sennett argues this point at length, but in response, I will argue that this objection can be bypassed.

At the beginning of this chapter, I put forth an argument which did not start with the premise that God exists in one possible world. Rather it was stated:

(4.6) The concept of the GPB is coherent (and thus broadly logically possible).

This being the case, one does not have to know if it is possible for the GPB to exist in one possible world before one knows that he exists in all possible worlds. Instead, his very coherence, internal consistency, is what is crucial. Therefore, if the concept of the GPB is internally consistent, then necessarily, he exists. The argument which begins with the premise that God exists in one possible world, is,

I believe, merely an attempt to say that if God is a coherent concept, then from the logic of that concept, he necessarily exists. Thus, whatever else may be said about Sennett's argument, a version of the modal ontological argument can be constructed to avoid his criticism. Sennett's other criticisms have been previously addressed.

James Ross' version of the ontological argument has elicited less criticism than Plantinga's. Nonetheless, some criticism has been stated and it might be wise to evaluate these objections as Ross' version, unlike Plantinga's, makes no appeal to possible worlds. His argument is stated as:

(4.55) It is possible that whatever is not the case should have either a self-explanation in terms of the inherent absurdity of its having been the case, or a hetero-explanation in terms of causes, agents, or producers whose actions prevent its being the case or whose own failure to act or to obtain is causally sufficient for its not being the case.

(4.56) 'God does not exist' cannot be the case, because:

a: There is no absurdity or contradiction in 'God does exist', and hence 'God does not exist' is not self-explanatory.

b: "God" cannot denote anything unless that thing be both uncaused and unpreventable by any other thing, by any entity whatever. Therefore, 'God' cannot denote anything which is such that 'God does not exist' is hetero-explicable.

(4.57) Then 'God exists must be the case.'⁶¹

Hugo Meynell criticizes the argument on the following grounds:

Let us say that a thing or state of affairs is possible₁ if there is no incoherence in the conception of it; that it is possible₂ if enabling conditions obtain for its existence or occurrence. Why should the existence of an unproducible producer not be as follows: possible₁, not possible₂, and not actual? Its actuality could be affirmed for good reasons only, it seems to me, if it were required to give a satisfactory explanation for some thing or state of affairs which was admitted to exist or to obtain.⁶²

The answer to this objection is short, and has basically already been stated. The only enabling conditions for the existence of God, who is defined as the being exemplifying maximal greatness, is that there be no incoherence in his concept. For God, possible₁ is identical with possible₂. If it is possible that he exist, then he exists. This is sufficient to refute this objection.

Additional objections along this line come from Richard Gale.⁶³ Gale comments that Ross' version of the ontological argument depends upon two premises. First, it is a logical or conceptual truth that God cannot be destroyed or created. Second, according to a weak version of the PSR, there is a possible explanation for the existence or non-existence of any particular entity. Gale states Ross' argument as:

(4.58) It is impossible that anything prevent the existence of God [conceptual truth];

(4.59) For every individual *x*, it is possible that there is an explanation for the fact that

x exists or the fact that x does not exist [a weak version of **the principle of sufficient reason**];

(4.60) God does not exist [assumption for indirect proof];

(4.61) It is possible that there is an explanation for the fact that God does not exist [from 2 and 3];

(4.62) It is not possible that there is an explanation for the fact that God does not exist [from 1];

(4.63) It is and it is not possible that there is an explanation for the fact that God does not exist [from (4.62) and (4.63)]; and

(4.64) It is false that God does not exist [from 3 through 6 by indirect proof].⁶⁴

As a contradiction can be deduced from the assumption that God does not exist, God exists. Gale makes his attack on the inference from premise (4.58) to (4.62). He asserts only something causal could prevent the existence of some entity. This is obviously false, as there could be logical absurdity in the concept of an entity which could prevent it from existing. In the case of God, an incoherence in the concept of deity would prevent him from existing. Another kind of noncausal explanation which would prevent the existence of some entity is the existence of some sort of positive reality, as in the case of if something is colored blue, then it is logically impossible that it also be colored red. In the case of God, Gale asserts that the existence of morally unjustified evil would be incompatible with God's existence.⁶⁵ Gale also argues that the ontological argument inconsistently states there can be no causal explanation for the existence of God.

Gale does not understand Ross' position. Gale admittedly states he is not specifically examining Ross' argument, nonetheless he is examining similar arguments. Ross does not state that everything must have causal explanations, rather his position is that an explanation can come from the inherent absurdity of some case (see (4.55) and (4.56a)). Some sort of conceptual incoherence is the only thing which would prevent God from existing. Indeed, in (4.56a), Ross affirms God is possible in the sense that there is no inherent absurdity in his existing. Therefore, Ross affirms in his argument what Gale states, that there can be noncausal explanations for the existence or non-existence of things. Hence, Gale's criticism is moot.

Another point which needs to be made is that Gale may be confusing ontology with epistemology. For if it could be proven there was evil which was totally morally unjustified, that would be a reason for disbelieving in God. This would be a modus tollens in the following form:

(4.64) If God exists, then there is no morally unjustified evil.

(4.65) But there is morally unjustified evil.

(4.66) Therefore, God does not exist.

It should be noted this argument would give one a reason for thinking God does not exist. However, there is another argument which is the direct opposite of this one:

(4.67) If God exists, then there is no morally unjustified evil.

(4.68) God exists.

(4.69) Therefore, there is no morally unjustified evil.

The question becomes is number (4.65) or (4.68) true? I will argue that, whatever their status, (4.68) is ontologically prior. If God exists as a necessary being, then he would control whatever else exists. Therefore, the existence of morally unjustified evil is logically contingent upon the existence of God. If a necessary God exists, then it is logically impossible for morally unjustified evil to exist. God is ontologically prior, or more basic. The belief that morally unjustified evil exists may give one a reason for believing that God does not exist, but this is epistemology, not ontology. From the perspective of the ontological argument, ontology is prior. Gale makes the same basic mistake here as he did with his critique of Plantinga's argument. Indeed, he himself admits this point is the 'linchpin' of his later argument against Plantinga.⁶⁶ In both cases the argument fails.

Gale's final argument is if God exists as a necessary being, then there must be a noncausal explanation. Otherwise, one runs into contradictions as the very purpose of the ontological argument is to give a noncausal explanation. This reasoning is correct, however defenders of the ontological argument have been saying this all along. This premise does not contain a sound objection to the ontological argument. Although I have not examined every variant of every objection, I believe all significant attacks on the modal ontological argument have been answered above.

As previously stated, to determine the existence of the GPB from the perspective of the ontological argument, one must conduct a detailed examination of the internal coherence of the concept of the GPB. If one discovers an irreducible contradiction, then the being cannot exist, however if one finds no such contradiction, then the being exists. This rationale provides justification to believe the GPB exists. The strength of the justification will depend upon two factors; the examination given and the person making the examination. For the non-theist propositions such as (4.5) will still seem implausible, even if he can't find an incoherence in the concept of God, because the very concept of a being exemplifying maximal greatness will seem an extravagant and unnecessary piece of ontology. If committed to naturalism he will judge allegedly existing entities, such as the GPB, as improbable because they

conflict with what his plausibility structure determines to be probable. I do not deny the possibility that a non-theist who follows the logic of the argument might end up believing in God. However, I maintain that such a conversion would consist in not only changing a belief in one proposition, but would involve changing the very way in which the world is viewed.

The theist, on the other hand, for whom the concept of God seems coherent, will find this argument provides him with a reason for belief in the GPB. The possibility of such a being will seem obvious, and if this premise is granted, the rest of the argument goes unchallenged. I am not saying that both starting points are equally plausible in themselves, but rather that different individuals will find one of the two starting points more plausible than the other based on what the individual already believes. In reality one or the other *has* to be true, either God exists or he does not. Yet according to different world-views one will seem true and the other false.

To summarize, let us imagine a situation in which two philosophers are examining the ontological argument. Philosopher *A* is a theist, who, upon examining the concept of the GPB to the best of his ability, finds no incoherence. He therefore comes to the conclusion that there is a reason to believe the GPB exists. Philosopher *B*, on the other hand, is a non-theist. He examines the concept of the GPB and discovers what he thinks is a contradiction. He therefore has a reason to believe the GPB does not exist. However, if he had not discovered a contradiction, he wouldn't have a reason for believing this. Indeed, had he discovered no incoherence, he would have had some reason for thinking the concept of the GPB is coherent, and therefore that the GPB exists. Obviously, an asymmetry exists.

The other factor mentioned is that people approach the problem with different plausibility structures based on different world-views. Thus, when Alvin Plantinga considers the concept of God, coming as his does from a theistic perspective, he is considering something which looks quite plausible to him. He embraces (4.1) or (4.6), and the argument 'goes through' for him. For Richard Gale, on the other hand, the truth of (4.6) seems implausible, and therefore the argument fails. Kai Nielsen claims that the meaning of (4.6) is not clear to him. The basic point to be made is that the presuppositions, beliefs and plausibility structures one has will strongly affect how one evaluates the ontological argument.

Nonetheless, I will argue that the modal ontological argument provides a sound reason for a belief in God. It is important to understand that the basis for a belief in God from the ontological argument is in our ability or inability to find a contradiction in the concept of God. It is not based, at least not primarily based, on intuition. Often in these matters the judgements made by philosophers come down to the intuitions they possess. When considering the question of God, theistic philosophers intuitively believe God's existence seems possible, while atheistic philosophers intuitively believe God's existence seems implausible or meaningless. Although I do not discount the functioning of intuition entirely, it is not what I am appealing to. Intuitions are by their very nature subjective. The appeal being made here is whether or not one can find a contradiction in the concept of God. This, in contradistinction to intuitions, is objective. If all one could appeal to were

intuitions, the question could never be decided, for as argued above, one's intuitions are based upon one's the world-view or philosophy. This is not the case with objective contradictions. A philosopher may not like the result he gets when he examines an entity for contradictions. His world-view may predispose him to try and find a contradiction or to remove all contradictions from the concept of an entity. The meaning of concepts may be different to people with varying world-views, but in the end logic is objective; the results of logical investigation are there to be studied, and are equally binding on all.

To summarize, if one can find an irreducible contradiction in the concept of the GPB, then one has grounds for believing such a being does not exist. Lack of a contradiction, on the other hand, provides a reason for believing in the existence of such a being. It is not, however, proof. Consider this statement by Peter Van Inwagen:

Consider the proposition that some three-inch-thick sheets of iron are transparent to visible light. This, I suppose, is an empirical proposition; at least we know empirically that it is false. Is it possibly true? I don't know and neither does anyone else. . . . *perhaps the electronic structure of the iron atom is such that, no matter what the charge on the electron was, iron atoms would have to fit together in such a way as to bar the passage of radiation in the visible frequencies.*⁶⁷

Van Inwagen raises an important point. Often one cannot tell if something is possible or not by conceptual examination. Can three-inch-sheets of iron become transparent to light? If one defines 'know' as having certainty or something close to it, then one cannot 'know', as all the variables involved are unknown. It is always possible there are factors one has overlooked. Still, I would argue it does seem at least logically possible for three-inch-thick sheets of iron to become transparent to light, if the laws which govern the behavior of both are different. One could non-contradictorily conceive of the photons of light, whenever they came close to an iron atom, being transformed into some kind of entity which was impervious to the effects of the iron atoms, and then, when at a safe distance, becoming photons of light again. Is this logically possible? It seems so to me, though I admit that due to the fact I cannot judge every variable or possibility perfectly, it may not be logically possible. Of course every situation is different. Still, I would argue my ability to conceive of the possibility of the three-inch-sheets of iron being transparent to light without an apparent contradiction does give some warrant to think it is logically possible. Similarly, my ability to conceive of God without any apparent contradictions gives me reason to think God does not have any contradictions inherent to his concept, and therefore by the logic of the ontological argument, he exists. However, as in the case of the iron sheets and the light, there may be other factors of which I am unaware that render the concept contradictory. Hence, as long as our knowledge of God is incomplete, which it always will be, there is the possibility that a contradiction exists. At this point I conclude that the modal version of the ontological argument gives us good reason, but not proof, for

believing that God, as classical theism describes *him*, exists.

Finally, let me quote Michael Martin on the ontological argument. He writes:

Arthur Schopenhauer wrote, “considered by daylight . . . and without prejudice, this famous ontological proof is really a charming joke.” One is tempted to agree. Yet, as we have seen, some well-known philosophers who have reputations as profound thinkers have taken it quite seriously. Given the problems with the argument outlined here, it is difficult to understand why they do.⁶⁸

On the contrary, one might say, given way the objections to the ontological argument can be refuted, one is tempted to wonder why so many philosophers have embraced *them*.

CHAPTER 5

THE TELEOLOGICAL AND COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS

The main focus of this chapter will be to determine if the cosmological and teleological arguments, in their strongest contemporary formulations, prove God's existence. It will be argued regardless of the criticisms against these concepts, they are unsuccessful in proving the existence of God, as their most basic premise is not undeniable.

In its various forms, the teleological argument appeals to the principles of either design or order.¹ In brief, the basic teleological argument begins with an example of a specific design or order within the universe, or of the whole universe itself, and then argues that God exists. This concept maintains that design or order needs a reason to exist, that the universe does not have an internal reason for its order or apparent design, and therefore, some other being or beings must be the reason why the universe exists as it does. However, this leads to a problem. If one agrees with the principle that something cannot give what it does not possess, then where did the being (or beings) which were the cause of the design or order in the universe get its (or their) order or design?

This is a complex problem which will require some analysis to resolve. Take for example the tenet that the cause of some property must possess the property it gives. This principle seems to have intuitive support. Yet at the same time, there are obvious counter-examples. One of which is a magnet which causes a piece of iron to move, it is the cause of the motion in the other object, yet it itself is not moving. There are numerous other counter-examples, such as unintelligent parents giving birth to intelligent children.

A solution to this puzzle lies, I believe, in the following analogy. Let us say, for any two objects X and Y , and two properties P and Q , in a particular world W which is governed by a particular law structure L (composed of logical and natural laws, which govern the behavior of the objects and properties in L), that X can cause Y to have Q , if and only if, X has P and is in a particular set of situations, $S1 \dots Sn$, in

W. In world *W** with law structure *L**, *X* could cause *Y* to have *Q*, if and only if, *W* had *P** and was in one of the situations *S*1* . . . *S**n**. The values of the different variables would differ from world to world. Of course, some of the variables could be the same in different worlds, e.g., *X* could cause *Y* to have *Q* by having *P* in both *W* and *W**. The essential point is that for *X* to cause *Y* to have *Q*, *X* must exist in a world with a definite law structure under which *S* can cause *Y* to have *Q* in relevant situations.

This means objects must exist with certain properties in a world governed by certain law structures which describe the actions of objects in those worlds. All worlds which are not chaotic must be governed by a particular law structure, or perhaps different law structures at different times and places, or even different law structures for different objects at the same time and place. Of course, different worlds may have radically different law structures from one another. The above only pertains to natural laws, like gravity. Logical laws are necessarily the same in all worlds.

When considering the teleological argument one must not only contemplate the properties of the objects involved, but also the law structure of the world in which they exist. If a bomb has a certain amount of energy it will cause *q* amount of destruction when it explodes in world *W*. In world *W**, on the other hand, it would cause *q** amount of destruction, which could be greater, less, or the same as *q*, because *W** is governed by a different law structure than *W*. The natural laws which govern the rate of energy transfer could be different. In world *W*** there might be no explosion at all, for in that world the laws may *designate* that the energy dissipate, or be converted into some kind of particle, rather than be released in an explosion.

Under most circumstances, the statement an object can only give what it has, is De Dicto analytically true; it is relative to the law structure in which the object exists. According to the law structure in world *W*, if a bomb has *P* amount of energy, and it is lawfully true that *P* amount of energy will cause *Q* amount of explosion, then it duly follows that the bomb's *P* amount of energy will cause (under the correct set of circumstances) *Q* amount of explosion. However, in different worlds with different law structures, the amount of explosion will vary. Therefore, this De Dicto analytic truth is subject to different conditions in different worlds. This truth is analytic because given the framework of a certain law structure *L* as a background, a certain cause *X* will give *Q* amount of effect in *Y*. Relative to *S*, a cause *X* can give *Q* to an object *Y* because there is in *S* a law such that 'if any object has *P*, then it can cause *Q* in another object *Y* under some set of relations *R*', and further *X* has *P* and stands in *R* to *Y*. Based on these conditions, it is analytic that *X* can cause *Y* to have *Q*. However, this is only De Dicto analytic, because under some other set of laws, say *S**, it would be false that *X* (because of its having *P*) could cause *Y* to have *Q*.

The statement, a thing can only give what it has, is analytically true, but *what this firmly entails* is only De Dicto analytically true. Similarly the statement, a man ought to do his duties, is analytically true by the meaning of duty, but what those

duties are may differ significantly from person to person and situation to situation. With relative analycity, the analycity can be founded on the laws of nature, and these are in one sense hardly arbitrary, albeit most agree they are contingent. Keeping this in mind an answer can be given to the pair of counter-examples listed in the text above. Regarding the example of the magnet, one can say the magnet, which is the cause, in the law structure of the actual world, has a certain amount of force which imparts resulting in the pulling of the iron to itself. According to the law structure of the actual world, different types of forces and energy are convertible, thus the force of the magnet is converted to the energy needed to move the iron. The magnet can only move certain amounts of iron as it only has a set amount of force, and since it is true that it can only give what it has, it can only move iron of a certain mass or less.

The answer to the counter-example of stupid parents giving birth to an intelligent child is founded in the laws of the universe. According to these laws, part of what causes intelligence, or the lack thereof, is the structure of the brain, and this structure is genetically controlled. However, genetics are partly random, and can result in genetic material being passed down from the parent to the child in such a way that certain properties are expressed in the child which were not expressed in the parent. Other apparent counter-examples can be handled in this manner.

Another objection can be raised to the premise that a thing can only give what it has. Admittedly, it may be logically possible for a human being (or at least a human body) to be formed, by chance, out of a vat of chemicals. Even though the odds of this happening are infinitesimal, it is still true that the laws of the universe which govern the behavior of matter must exist. Therefore, it is evident that things may only give what they have. However, this objection may be raised in a different form. Isn't it possible for something to arise out of nothing, for no reason at all? Some believe the very universe itself arose that way.² Is this logically possible, and if so, doesn't this contradict the principle, which has been defended as analytic, that a thing may only give what it has? If something arose for no reason at all, it would not contradict that principle. For nothing, though it is easy to reify and speak as if it were an entity is *nothing*. The principle which has been defended is 'a thing may only give what it has'. Nothing is not a thing, and therefore does not fall under this principle. Hence, the principle stands.

In the discussion of the teleological argument we have seen that this premise appeals to the principle of order or apparent design. Does this principle work in all possible worlds, or is it applicable only to some? The answer that will be given has trans-world validity. If one sees there are many ways in which things can be arranged, and most of them are chaotic or disordered, and then one sees there is something arranged in an orderly manner, then one would naturally and justifiably think there is a reason for this state of affairs. This would seem to be true in any world. For example, in a world where things come to order out of chaos on a regular basis, it would seem that there was some sort of orderer, (not necessarily a personal orderer), who was the reason for this.³ Similarly, if there were many ways in which an object could be made, but it was made in a way where it seemed

to behave in some purposeful manner, then, again, it could be reasonably thought to have had a designer.

These are *prima facie* judgments only; they could be defeated. Nonetheless, the initial plausibility for the existence of an orderer/designer remains. For example, if one was walking along the beach and found a group of shells arranged to spell 'Vote for Smith', then one could reasonably assume they had been arranged like that by a person, although the possibility would remain that they were arranged by the random action of the waves.

If there were a designer or orderer of the universe, then that being would be highly ordered. For if he were disordered, it would be impossible to explain where the order in the product that he caused originated. As has been shown, disorder in and of itself cannot produce order. It may be logically possible for order to come about by a random action. But disorder, chaos, does not in itself have an explanation for any order which arises from it. A hurricane in a junkyard may possibly produce, out of various pieces of broken cars, a functioning automobile. This is in the realm of possibility. However, what caused the car was not disorder in itself. There is no thing 'disorder', which exists and brings the auto into existence. 'Disorder' is a word like 'chance', or 'nothing'. They are terms which describe a lack of something, and have no existence in themselves. To say chance, nothing, or disorder, for example caused something, is to reify these terms.

In the example of the hurricane, if the universe were ordered according to a deterministic law structure, then everything by definition would have a cause. It makes no sense to say chance or disorder would bring about the new automobile instead, every part used to assemble the automobile would have a cause according to the laws of nature. While this is true in a sense, there is another sense in which it is not. For while every event which contributed to the making of the auto had a deterministic cause, the fact it made an *automobile* was by chance. It was deterministic that all the parts came together in the order they did. The automobile was not constructed according to a law of nature, instead it was a random series of events, that by chance had the same structure as the series of events needed to build an automobile.⁴ There was causation, *but at a different level*. At the first level, the parts, there was no chance. At the second higher level, the creation of the automobile, there was chance as there was no automobile planned, and all the events which came together to create the car were by chance, for no reason.

To summarize the above, order may possibly be produced by chance, but disorder in itself is not a cause, nor is it lawful. In order for a being, God, to be the cause of the order of the universe, God must be ordered. To produce a universe, a God must have great knowledge both of the universe to be constructed and of how to construct one. God must have great, controlled power, to enable him to create the universe he wants to create, and must be in control of his knowledge, his power, himself and his desires for anything other than chaos to result.

So, does the creator need a creator? Based on the principle of the teleological argument, it would appear so. Order or design generally imply there was some sort of orderer or designer. Hence, the designer has a designer. However, the same

teleological argument could be applied to the second designer, and so on, ad infinitum. This only makes the problem worse. Even if one were to postulate the existence of an infinite number of designers (the universe caused by god *A*, *A* caused by *B*, *B* caused by *C*, and so on forever) then taking the situation as a whole, there is an infinite complexity of order and design. Is a designer for the whole series necessary? It seems the only way out of this situation, if one accepts the basic principle of the teleological argument, is to accept the existence of a designer or a god as a necessary being, that is, one that exists in all possible worlds, and has the reason for his existence within himself, being uncaused and indeed uncausable.⁵ This line of reasoning stops here. And, although it would be logically possible for there to be more than one god, as far as explanatory power is concerned, more than one would be superfluous. The necessary God, although highly ordered, would not call for an orderer or designer, because he himself is the basis of all possibility, the ontological center of all possible worlds. In this case, one could say order was ultimately real, and necessarily so, and the order we find in this world was merely a reflection of this.

It seems the teleological argument, with the help of what may be called a chain argument, does, if pushed to its logical conclusion, lead to the existence of a necessary being. Basically the same argument could be used to show that arguments from existential causation, and sufficient reason also lead to a necessary being. Each of the aforementioned cases begins with the assumption that things need a reason or cause for their existence. With that assumption taken as a premise, one moves to an analysis of the necessary being's cause.

To analyze this being's cause, one must examine the arguments from the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) and the Principle of Existential Causation (PEC). There are several versions of the PSR, but basically it states everything needs a reason for existing in the manner it does. The basic premise of the PEC is all contingent, finite beings need a cause to exist. The PEC states all contingent, finite, changeable beings composed of essence (what they can be) and existence (the fact that they do exist) need a cause of their existence. This statement is an example of existence *simpliciter*, existence qua existence, as opposed to existing in one manner or another. Therefore, saying contingent beings need a cause for their existence, is saying these beings need a cause for their existence at every moment of their existence, not merely a cause for their existence in a certain way. In physical objects, for example, there must be a cause for the very matter of their being, not merely a cause for them to exist in a certain way, as small, red, bald, stupid, etc. In order for a contingent being to cause the existence of another, it would have to actualize that being. It is difficult to see how a contingent being, one that by definition needs a cause and cannot be self-caused, could cause another being to exist *simpliciter*. If all contingent beings are caused by another being (which is demanded by the PEC and the principle that no being can be self-caused) then any actuality or power they have is caused by another. Therefore, a contingent being could only cause the existence of another because of the existence and power it received from the being which was its cause.

The acceptance of the PSR, that there is a reason for everything to be, or not be the way it is, leads one to the same conclusion. Application of the PSR to a contingent being furnishes sufficient reason for its existence. However, by the definition of contingency, contingent beings do not have the reason for their existence intrinsic to themselves. Therefore, according to the PSR, they must have a reason for their existence outside themselves. Thus, granting both the PEC and the PSR, one comes to the conclusion that any contingent being must have an extrinsic cause and/or reason for its existence. Since this analysis could be applied to any contingent being, it is obvious that no contingent being can be the real cause for the existence or non-existence of any being.

This leads to the point that an infinite regress of contingent beings cannot, under either the PEC or the PSR, be the cause and/or reason for the existence of contingent beings. Under the PEC, an infinite regress of contingent beings does not have the power to actualize any other being, as all the members of this series of beings receive their existence or power for some other being. However, in an infinite series of contingent causes there is no cause which has existence or power to actualize on its own; all the members have *received* power. Therefore, there is, in the infinite series, no cause or power to actualize, or cause to make exist the members of the series. If all that existed were beings which had no power to actualize themselves or any other being, then even if there were an infinite number of them, there would still be no 'actualizer', no being capable of actualizing anything. Actualizing power would not exist at any point in the series. The infinite series, to be actual, would have to be actualized by something outside of it, assuming the validity of the PEC. Extending the chain to infinity is irrelevant as far as the power to actualize a being is concerned.

The PSR leads to the same conclusion. If everything needs a sufficient reason to exist rather than not exist, then adding up an infinite number of beings which have no reason for their existence intrinsic to themselves, does not give a reason for anything to exist. The mere fact there is an infinite number does nothing to change the situation. If *Z* has no reason to exist, and is caused by *Y*, which has no reason to exist, then one is still left with no reason for the existence of either of them. If one were to reply *Y* is *Z*'s reason to exist, *X* is *Y*'s reason to exist, and so on forever, this would still not provide a sufficient reason for any of them to exist. The PSR (or some version of it) states everything must have sufficient (or complete) reason for existing or not existing in the manner it does. For any two contingent series, say *Y* and *Z*, where *Y* is the cause of *Z*, if *Y* is contingent it cannot by itself provide a complete reason for *Z*'s existence in a particular manner. This is because *Y*, not having a reason to exist intrinsic to itself, is either uncaused (in which case it does not have a sufficient or complete reason to exist) or is caused by another (in which case its reason for existing comes from another being). As a result, *Y* does not have a sufficient or total reason intrinsic to itself for existing or the power to cause another's existence, and therefore *Y* cannot provide a complete reason for *Z*'s existing as it does. To explain why *Z* exists in the manner it does, one would have to look beyond *Y*. Thus, for the same reasons that *Y* cannot be a sufficient

explanation for the existence of *Z* in a particular manner, neither could *X*, or *W*, etc. No contingent being, can by definition, provide a complete explanation as to why it, or anything else exists. The PSR *requires* complete reasons for the causation of anything.

Further, if one were to imagine an infinite chain of contingent beings, then one has a set of members who are each contingent. All receive their existence from some other being. Thus, none of them control, or could control, the law structures in the world in which they subsist. They each receive their existence and properties from some other being or beings in accordance with the law structure of that world. So, in terms of logical order, the law structure must exist before the entities whose behavior they govern, including the entities in the infinite set. However, since we are positing only the existence of contingent beings, the particular law structure of that world would be uncaused and therefore the existence of that law structure would have no explanation. Therefore, in this situation (in which there are only contingent beings, albeit an infinite number of them) there is no reason for the existence of that law structure, and thus for the behavior of the beings who are governed by the law structure.⁶ This contradicts the PSR.

Even if this last argument were rejected, there is still another consideration. Recall the chain argument which was used in the teleological argument. Applied to the PEC and PSR one could conclude that even an infinite series of contingent causes, (if they could exist, which is not uncontroversial) would provide no cause or reason for any of the members to exist. Hence, a series of contingent beings is itself contingent. Why couldn't a another series of contingent beings exist, one with different members? Or no infinite series at all? If all the members are contingent, then the series as a whole will be contingent.

At this point, a critic of the argument will object that this premise commits the fallacy of composition; attributing to the whole what is true of the parts. However, I do not believe this is the case, although it is true that sometimes when one attributes the properties of the parts to the whole, one commits a fallacy. If all the parts of a larger entity are square, this does not necessarily mean the entity as a whole will be square, as anyone who has constructed things from building blocks can testify. On the other hand, an entity whose parts are all made of metal will itself be made of metal. It is clear the property of contingency is in the same class as the latter example and not the first. As Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach and David Basinger state, "If all the contingent parts of the universe, including matter and energy, ceased to exist simultaneously, then the universe itself, as the totality of these parts, would cease to exist. But if it can cease to exist, it is contingent and requires an explanation for its existence."⁷ As the universe cannot be anything greater than the sum total of its parts, it cannot exist separate from its parts. And since the parts could all cease to exist, so could the universe. Similarly, an infinite series of anything cannot be greater than the sum total of its parts, and if its parts are all contingent, then the infinite series could cease to exist.

If the above arguments are sound, then by the principles of the PEC and the PSR, the existence of contingent beings necessitates the existence of a necessary being.

This, however, leaves a larger question, are either the PEC or the PSR true? Let us first examine the PEC which is the principle of existential causation. Again, this principle states that all composed beings need a cause for their existence. A composed being is a being which has as properties a mixture of actuality and potentiality. It actually exists as something, but can possibly be other than it is. The philosophers who give the strongest and most complete defense of the PEC are Winfried Corduan and Norman Geisler.

Their response to the question of why a being must have a reason for its existence, is because potentiality by itself cannot bring about the existence of a being. Therefore, an actually existing being is needed to cause the actuality of any existing finite beings. They write:

Our knowledge of the need for existential causality arises out of an analysis of finite being The analysis may be summarized as: Existence as such is unlimited; all limited existence is being limited by something distinct from existence itself (this limiting factor will be called essence); whatever is being limited is being caused (for to be limited in being is to be caused to be in a certain finite way; a limited existence is a caused existence.); therefore, all limited beings are caused beings.

We might also note that all limited beings are composed beings; they are composed of essence and existence--an essence that limits the kind of existence they can have. Likewise, an unlimited being is an uncomposed being (e.g., a simple Being). Such a Being has no limiting essence as such. Its essence is identical with its unlimited existence. The need for causality, then, is derived from an analysis of what finite being is. Upon examination, finite being is seen to be caused being, and caused being must have a cause of its being.⁸

The authors contend that the very notion of a finite being necessarily entails the notion of a caused being. The reasons they give for this may be formalized as:

(5.1) Existence as such is unlimited.

(5.2) All limited existence is limited by something distinct from existence itself, by its essence.

(5.3) Whatever is limited is caused, for to be limited is to be caused to be in a certain way.

(5.4) Therefore all limited beings are caused beings.

The first point which can be made about this argument is the authors use the term limited in two different senses. Limited is defined as something which is finite or restricted in some way. This definition is really two different concepts, that of being finite and that of being restricted. These are not the same. For example, it is not the case that something which is three feet long, because it is limited, is being restricted. It is not as if some other being were holding it back. Therefore, two

definitions of the term limited have been expressed, (a) being finite and (b) being restricted. These two definitions must be investigated to determine whether any being who has one of them as a property is being caused.

The authors argue that a finite being's existence is limited by something called essence; the essential properties possessed by the being. Is it correct to say a finite being's existence is limited? In a loose sense it is. One may speak, for example, of a being's existence as limited because it existed for only a short time. However, this speaks of the entity itself being limited in its existence. On the other hand, the authors seem to mean that existence itself is limited. Existence in itself, as a concept, is unlimited. Therefore, any particular existence, say the existence of my desk, has to be limited, or made to be finite, by its essence.

This is confusing as there is no such thing as existence apart from what actually exists. Existence is only a characteristic of that which exists. The existence of my desk is simply the fact that my desk exists. It is instantiated extra-mentally in the actual world. While it is true that the concept of existence is not necessarily tied to the concept of being finite (it seems possible infinite things exist), it is not true that the concept of existence is necessarily tied to the concept of being unlimited. Existence is a concept that is an aspect of the objects which exist or could exist, and has no meaning apart from them. It is not existence *qua* existence which is limited or unlimited, it is the objects that exist which are limited or unlimited. To prove the existence of a finite being is necessarily caused, one would have to prove that finite being itself is necessarily caused. The authors attempt to justify the opposite procedure, thereby getting things backwards. A finite existence is just the existence of a finite being, and there seems to be no reason here to think the existence of a finite being is caused.

The second definition of limitation, being restricted, does entail being caused. It is important to specify what exactly is being caused. There is a difference between something which is caused to be in a certain way, and being caused to exist at all. An entity or aspect of an entity can be caused to exist in some way, e.g., be purple, without actually being caused to exist simpliciter. What does it mean to say the existence of something was caused to exist in some manner? Existence is the instantiation of something in the actual world. Existence itself is not something which exists in some manner, rather the being exists in some manner. The authors show that one aspect of finite beings, existence, is caused to be in a particular way by another aspect of finite beings, essence. Simply put, the being is caused by its essence to exist in a certain manner. This is a different proposition than stating all finite beings need an external cause for their existence.

It could be argued that all finite beings are caused to exist by an external entity because the alternative, that the beings were caused by nothing, is impossible. The problem with this kind of argument is it assumes things need a cause, which is the very point that needs to be established. Stating that a nothing caused a being to exist, is *not* stating that there is some thing called nothing which is the cause of the being. The statement simply means the being exists without a cause.

Hence, the authors have failed to show it is impossible for finite beings to exist

without a cause. However, these authors are not alone in their belief of this premise. Bruce Reichenbach defends both the PEC and the PSR. As the PEC has already been investigated, the principle of sufficient reason or the PSR will now be examined. Reichenbach defends the version of the PSR which states all *contingent* beings need a reason for their existence. Reichenbach's argument is outlined below:

(5.5) All contingent beings have their existence accidental to their essence.

(5.6) That which has its existence accidental to it is dependent on something for its existence.

(5.7) To be dependent is to be caused, e.g., to have a set of necessary sufficient conditions for it.

(5.8) Therefore, all contingent beings have a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for themselves.⁹

The weakest point in this argument is (5.6), as one can simply deny the premise that things which have their existence accidental to them need a reason for their existence. In effect, what the defenders of the PEC and the PSR have done, is beg the question. They assume there has to be a cause/reason for the existence of everything, or at least of all finite beings. This is exactly what defenders of Brute Fact theory deny. The Brute Fact theory, by definition, states that ultimately things exist without a reason and/or cause. There may be causation and reason at a secondary level, e.g., gravity causes water to flow downhill and so forth, but ultimately there is no reason why things exist or have the properties they do. Kelly James Clark, in criticizing a work which attempts to show God exists via an argument which states that all contingent being must be caused, writes, "The authors . . . have omitted the most significant alternative: that there exists an eternal contingent series of causes. This is the most plausible intellectual alternative to theism."¹⁰ Any defenders of the PSR or PEC must argue against this alternative.

It must be clearly understood that two meanings of the term 'contingent' exist. The first definition, as Reichenbach writes above, is to be dependent upon something for one's existence. This will be called contingentD. The second definition is simply that a being does not have to exist. In other words a being whose existence is possible but not necessary. This will be called contingentP. The apparent problem is contingentP does not entail contingentD. One can accept that things exist which did not have to exist, without necessarily believing that they are dependent for their existence upon some other being or beings. However, I do not believe it is really possible for beings to exist for no reason, or without a cause for their existence, although this cannot be shown directly. The only way to prove this is to first show that God, as he is described in classical theism, exists, and then prove that everything needs a reason for its existence. This approach cannot utilize the premise that everything needs a cause for its existence.

Reichenbach, however, offers another justification for accepting the PSR. Simply put, it is necessary to accept the PSR if one is attempting to understand the universe rationally. If the PSR is not accepted, then any justification for rationally understanding the universe is lost. Reichenbach argues, "[T]he principle of sufficient reason is a basic indemonstrable, necessary principle of human reasoning."¹¹ In order to understand something, one must assume there are reasons for it to be the way it is. However, this is not the same as stating that everything, every aspect or property of everything, must have a reason for why it exists as it does. Suppose, for example, one is considering why my desk is the way it is, (so large, weighing so much, an incredible mess, etc.) In examining it, one would look for reasons and in most cases would find them. If there were no reasons why my desk, or anything else, were the way it is, then there could be no understanding. However, understanding something does not entail understanding it fully.

One can understand why my desk is the way it is based on its history and certain laws of nature, such as gravity, without needing to understand each of the individual concepts that explain why it is the way it is. For example, one might understand how gravity helped explain why the desk is the way it is, without needing to understand why gravity is the way it is. Thus, reasons can exist which explain why the objects in the universe are the way they are, without it necessarily being the case for reasons to exist which explain why the basic laws of nature are the way they are. If this is true, then one could understand things without fully understanding everything about them. Therefore, the fact that reasons exist for things to be the way they are, does not entail there are reasons for everything, including every property to be the way they are. Thus, the argument which Reichenbach proposes, fails to prove his point. There is no reason why one cannot have *partial* understanding of something.

If the PSR is applied to every contingent object, would there a reason why the PSR is necessarily true? Why should the PSR be true? There is no apparent contradiction in stating there does not have to be a reason why everything is the way that it is, so it cannot depend upon the law of non-contradiction. I believe the PSR is necessarily true because it is a law which subsists in a necessary, sovereign God.¹² Restated, a necessary God exists who is sovereign, hence everything which happens is within his control. However, if this is true, the concept of the PSR is dependent upon the concept of God, and therefore cannot be used to argue to the existence of God.

Brain Leftow puts forth an interesting attempt to defend the thesis that all contingent beings need a cause. First, he defines the concept of being *d*-explained. Something is *d*-explained if and only if:

(5.9) *y* is actual.

(5.10) *x* is an actual concrete substance not identical with *y*.

(5.11) The existence or some activity of *x* entails that *y* exists.

(5.12) Necessarily, if y is actual, x 's existence or activity is at least part of the explanation of this.

(5.13) The relation whose obtaining between x and y entails that (5.11) and (5.12) are true is irreflexive, asymmetrical and transitive.¹³

With this base, Leftow goes on to defend a version of the cosmological argument. Only the first part of the argument will be listed below.

(5.14) The fact that there exist just the changeable things that do exist (henceforward, the fact C) obtains. (premise)

(5.15) C is possibly d-explained. (premise)

(5.16) For all actual x , if x is possibly d-explained, x is actually d-explained. (premise)

(5.17) If C is possibly d-explained, C is actually d-explained. (5.16), universal instantiation)

(5.18) C is d-explained. (5.15), (5.17) modus ponens)¹⁴

The most crucial premise is obviously (5.16). (5.14) basically maintains there exists a world of changing things, and that this state of affairs can be called C . (5.15) maintains it is possible for C to be caused. This may be more controversial than (5.14), but I think it is defensible as most would at least admit the epistemic possibility that some kind of God exists, and that this God created this universe. (5.16), on the other hand, does not appear to be true at first glance as the reasoning behind possibility leading to actuality is questionable.

The argument Leftow gives for (5.16) is as follows.¹⁵ If F is defined as the d-explainer of all concrete entities other than itself, then the claim that some entity is the F looks like this: *(there is an x) (y) ($Cy \cdot (y \neq x) \rightarrow Dx, y$)*.¹⁶ Leftow argues that this equation looks consistent and there seems to be no contradiction in it. Therefore, he concludes if it is possibly true, then it is true. If a sentence describing some entity seems consistent, then it seems the entity could possibly exist. If it is metaphysically possible that an F exists, then it does. Leftow then adduces another argument for his thesis. "Let S name some state of affairs whose metaphysical possibility we want to assess."¹⁷ Leftow asserts five propositions about S .

(5.19) Our confidence that S is possible should increase the greater the proposition of S 's components which are known to be or have been actual . . .

(5.20) The more S is like some past or present state of affairs, the more confidence we should have that S is possible . . .

(5.21) The greater the agreement of impartial thinkers that S is possible, the more reason we have for assurance that S is really possible . . .

(5.22) Our confidence in S's possibility should increase the less definite the description of S we consider . . .

(5.23) The fewer S's components, the fewer the opportunities for them to come to conflict among themselves (or with other states of affairs) . . .¹⁸

This list of reasons bears some resemblance to the reasons which were given in the last chapter for thinking that the concept of God is a coherent concept. Upon examination, Leftow's second reason for (5.16) is simply that the concept of God is coherent, and therefore there is reason to think God exists and is the cause of the universe. This is simply a restatement of the ontological argument and as the soundness of this argument was examined in detail in the last chapter, it shall not be re-examined here. Leftow supports my thesis that our knowledge of the truth of the PSR or the PEC depend upon our knowledge of God, and not *visa versa*.

Finally, Leftow defends (5.16) by writing:

Suppose that some *y* is possibly *d*-explained. In this case *y* is possibly is such that some *x* fulfills (*d*) in the definition of *d*-explanation. If some *x* possibly fulfills (*d*), then in some possible world *W*, there is an *x* such that in no *W** accessible from *W* is it the case that *y* exists and this *x* does not at least partly explain *y*'s existence. (*D*) makes a claim about metaphysical possibility. Let us make the common assumption that the modal system S5 catches the logic of metaphysical possibility. Now in S5, the actual world is accessible from any *W*. Therefore if *y* is actual, and *y* is possibly *d*-explained, *y*'s existence is actually *d*-explained by *x*. Thus, for any actual *y*, if *y* is possibly *d*-explained, *y* is actually *d*-explained: (5.16) is a direct consequence of the definitional truth (*d*) and the S5 thesis mentioned.¹⁹

Leftow's argument depends upon the crucial assumption that if some *y* is *d*-explained by *x* in some world *W*, then for every world *W** *y* is *d*-explained by *x*. The principle at stake is if some *y* is possibly *d*-explained, then *y* cannot be anything other than *d*-explained. Leftow assumes this in the above argument, however in order for his argument to be sound, this is the very principle which needs to be proven. Why isn't it possible to conceive that for some *y*, there is some world *W* where *y* is *d*-explained by *x*, and another world *W'* where *y* is *d*-explained by *z*, and yet another world *W''* where *y* is not *d*-explained at all? In establishing the principle that for all *y*'s there is necessarily some *d*-explainer *x*, the above argument becomes useless.

This does not necessitate the validation of the opposite principle, that entities do not need a *d*-explainer. For besides the aforementioned argument, Leftow appeals to intuition and the Kripkean thesis that an entity's origin is essential to it.²⁰ Philosophers have had varying views regarding this appeal to intuition and in general find the Kripkean thesis controversial. Why couldn't the same table, for example, be constructed by two different carpenters in two different, albeit similar worlds? Thus Leftow's point is irrelevant. Even if the Kripkean thesis is correct, there could still be in a possible world some *y* which was caused, and in a different,

but very similar possible world, an entity which was exactly like *y* except it was not caused. It may be arguable whether the object in the second world really was *y*, but even if not, there seems to be no reason why it could not exist uncaused. If the Kripkean thesis is incorrect, then the entity in question could not have a cause in any possible world. This premise may create some confusion about causation. The important point to remember is even if all entities must have the same originating cause to be the individual entity it is, the reason it keeps on existing after it has been created is the focus of this argument. The cosmological arguments from both the PEC and the PSR are really about why things exist at all and remain in existence, rather than why they were created. The identity of an entity does not seem to be in question if different things sustain its existence in different possible worlds, or if it remains in existence in some world for no reason at all.

In the case of God however, there are additional factors to consider. It seems if God exists, and exists in every possible world, then any other concrete entity which exists in any possible world must be *d*-explained by God. This premise is based on the traditional concept of God as sovereign. Thus, it seems plausible that Leftow is correct; if *F*, the principle that there is a *D*-explainer of all concrete entities other than itself, is true, then it is necessarily true. If there is a possible world where God causes the entire universe to exist, then granting the concept of God as a sovereign being who exists in all possible worlds, there is no world where the universe exists and is not caused by God. If, on the other hand, the FNG were to exist, then it's possible that in some worlds God exists and is the cause of the universe, while in others God does not exist and the universe exists uncaused. If it were argued that the universes in this situation were different, then the scenario could be modified so that in world *W* the FNG exists and causes a universe, while in world *W'* the FNG does not exist and a universe exists uncaused which has the same properties as world *W* except it is a different universe. (The universe in *W'* would be a counterpart of the universe in *W*.) Nothing in Leftow's argument seems to rule this out. And if this possibility can't be ruled out, then it's possible there are worlds where a universe exists uncaused. Again one is left with the conclusion that the principles of PSR or PEC, if true, depend upon the sovereign LNG for their truth.

Alternative methods exist which attempt to justify that all being is necessarily caused. One of these arises from an affirmation of the total intelligibility of being. From this basic premise Bernard J. Lonergan has put forth an argument that all being is dependent upon God. He writes, "If the real is completely intelligible, then complete intelligibility exists. If complete intelligibility exists, the idea of being exists. If the idea of being exists, then God exists. Therefore, if the real is completely intelligible, God exists."²¹ The essential point in Lonergan's argument is that all being is by necessity, by very definition, intelligible. He states, "Now being is completely intelligible. For being is the objective of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know, this desire consists in intelligent inquiry and critical reflection."²² The culmination of Lonergan's argument asserts that being is by nature the intelligible. Nothing inherently unintelligible to some possible mind could possibly exist. Given this, and working from the concept that

being is completely intelligible he goes on to say, "It follows that the only possibility of complete intelligibility lies in spiritual intelligibility that cannot inquire because it understands everything about everything. And such unrestricted understanding is the idea of being."²³

Lonergan develops his position on the nature of being and intelligibility at great length. While his work is impressive, it is clear Lonergan has confused intelligibility with being intelligible to someone. He has argued, (correctly I think) that being is by nature that which can be understood. However, he goes beyond what the argument really supports to further conclude that being is not only understandable, but is in fact being understood. Of course, I do not deny that being is intelligible and is understood in its completeness by God. This can only be directly proven if that which is intelligible, in the sense of being able to be understood, is also synonymous with that which is being intelligible in the sense of being actually understood by someone. These are two entirely different things and there is no direct method of showing that the first entails the latter.

Lonergan has another argument for his position which can be summarized as, "The first element is the process that identifies the real with being, then identifies being with complete intelligibility, and finally identifies complete intelligibility with the unrestricted act of understanding that possesses the properties of God and accounts for everything else."²⁴ In this argument Lonergan is appealing to the notion of complete intelligibility. If the real is that which is understandable, then it must be completely intelligible. He writes, "[T]he real is the objective of an unrestricted desire to understand correctly; to be such an objective, the real has to be completely intelligible, for what is not intelligible is not the objective of a desire to understand, . . ."²⁵ For Lonergan being (the real) is that which is intelligible. However, if something existed without a cause or reason, it would not be completely intelligible, as it could not, according to his theory, be the completely real.

The point in all of this is if something could exist without a reason it would not be completely intelligible. If it is true that ultimately, the universe and everything in it exists for no reason as the Brute Fact theory holds, then it is unintelligible in that regard. Utilizing this theory one may ask why something is green or round and get an answer in terms of reasons and causes, but if one asks why the matter of which it is composed of exists, there is no reason. Its existence would be surd or brute. Hence, if there is no reason, then its existence cannot be completely understandable. For understanding must necessarily consist of reasons for being.

Granting this, there is no reason to concede Lonergan's other points. An opponent to Lonergan's views might ask, why isn't it possible the concept of complete intelligibility is non-existent? Perhaps everything is understandable in terms of reasons, except for the simple existence of matter or the universe. Why can't a piece of matter exist for no reason and this be the only unintelligibility there is in that aspect of it? These questions ultimately provide Lonergan's opponent with two responses to his argument. The first is simply to deny that there is complete intelligibility; to accept things can exist for no reason. To state reality

must be completely intelligible otherwise it can't be totally understood, is begging the question. The second is to posit a lesser intelligibility, even if some things existed for no reason at all. A limited intelligibility would exist in the acceptance of the premise that things can exist for no reason. The understanding of things as far as they were intelligible could count as complete intelligibility. This would be a lesser intelligibility than the one Lonergan defends. However, it could be asserted this lesser intelligibility is the best one could do as reality is simply that way. Thus Lonergan's argument is unsuccessful. The *a priori* possibility that there is not a reason for everything cannot be ruled out. The unrestricted desire to know or understand in terms of reasons would necessarily be subject to frustration.

Up until now the concept of causation has been perceived as *keeping in being*. The basic question has been, why do beings both come into and stay in existence? The fact beings remain in existence is considered by the Thomists to be as large a problem as why they come into existence in the first place. These philosophers consider both the coming into existence, and the remaining in existence, to be philosophical problems. On the other hand, there are many philosophers who have no problem with beings remaining in existence, while at the same time, cannot conceive of how the original being came into existence.

Barry Miller defends the notion that logically necessary finite beings have a cause for coming into existence. His argument can be stated as:

(5.24) Fido exists.

(5.25) According to a Fregean way--which is not necessarily **the only legitimate way**--of understanding Fido's existing, instances of two categorical parts are to be distinguished in it, viz. Fido and his existence.

(5.26) Either these two parts are related to Fido's existing as its constituents or they are related to it as its components.

(5.27) But, they cannot be its components; since their being **components** of Fido's existing would entail that it had *no* components.

(5.28) Therefore they are constituents of Fido's existing.

(5.29) Therefore Fido's existing should be conceptually constructable from Fido and his existence.

(5.30) But there seems to be no point for such construction, since Fido's existence is disqualified by being an incomplete entity and Fido is disqualified by being inconceivable until he has completed his existence.

(5.31) (5.29) and (5.30) cannot both be true.

(5.32) Therefore, there must be some way of resolving the dilemma posed by (5.29) and (5.30).²⁶

Miller argues one cannot coherently conceive of something until it actually exists and that every existing being is composed of two parts, the being and its existence. However, existence is what Miller calls an incomplete entity; something which is not conceivable on its own. Hence, in the case of Fido his existence cannot be coherently thought about apart from his being. Writes Miller:

Fido can be the first step in the construction only if he is *able* to complete his existence.

However, while Fido has the capacity to complete his existence only *coincidentally* with that capacity's being employed, he cannot have it *in virtue* of its being employed. Why? Because, to have that capacity in virtue of its being employed would be to have it in virtue of Fido's existing; and thus Fido's existing would be ontologically prior to Fido, which is contrary to Fido's existing being a constituent of his existing. Nor, however, can Fido have that capacity simply in virtue of his status as a concrete individual, otherwise he would have been conceivable even before he existed.²⁷

In order to resolve this dilemma, Miller posits the existence of God, who is able to create Fido. This part of Miller's argument does not pertain to this discussion, what is important is his claim that by necessity, every finite being is composed of two parts; the entity itself and its existence. Neither can be coherently thought of prior to the entity's existing. In short, to exist, Fido must be constructible, but the parts which compose Fido cannot serve as a basis for his construction. Therefore, a cause necessarily exists which is extrinsic to Fido for his existence. This statement is true for every finite being. For this reason, Miller maintains every finite being has an external cause for its existence.

Essential to Miller's argument is the notion that Fido (or any other finite being) must be constructible. Hence, in order for Fido to exist, he must be able to be built without reference to external entities, and the procedure must be completed one step at a time. The question of why this must be the procedure is then asked. Why does one have to proceed from one of the components of Fido, either Fido or Fido's existing, to the other? Why can't they both just come into existence at once? Let us suppose that Fido comes into existence at time *T*. Before *T* Fido did not exist so there was no problem with his being or construction. At *T* and after *T* both Fido and Fido's existence exist together. Again, there is no problem with Fido's construction or his being in this situation. The question still remains, why couldn't Fido and Fido's being just come into existence together at *T* for no reason?

Miller's problem comes from his previously stated belief, that in order for Fido to actually exist, logically, there must be a procession from one component to the other. However, Miller argues this is not logically possible. Neither component of Fido has the capacity to complete Fido's existence. To account for the obvious fact that Fido and other finite beings exist, he introduces an external being, God, who has the capacity to complete Fido's existence. However, this whole thought presupposes that something, either Fido, Fido's existence or God, must have the

capacity to complete Fido's existence. This begs the question, as it rules out, a priori, the position that entities like Fido can be completed or come into existence, without any thing effecting the completion. It cannot be ruled out a priori that entities can be completed without any entity or component of an entity effecting the completion. Since all that is required for Fido to exist is that both Fido and Fido's existing are somehow 'there in Fido' together, there seems to be no immediate *logical* problem with both components coming into existence at once for no reason. Fido's existence would be completed for no reason without anybody effecting the completion. Hence, there would be no need to begin with one component and then proceed to the other for construction. Thus, Miller's argument that it is contradictory for Fido to come into existence without a cause, fails.

William Craig also believes that beings need a cause for their existence. He argues the proposition,

(5.33) Everything that begins to exist has a cause of its existence.

is necessarily true.²⁸ Simply put, nothing can come into existence without a cause. Embracing (5.33) commits one to the belief that everything which exists needs a cause of its existence for every time *t* that it exists.

Craig believes (5.33) is a self-evident truth. He argues although it is *conceivable* for things to come into existence out of nothing, it is not really possible. As justification, he quotes several different philosophers including Hume, Broad and Anscombe who basically state that while one can imagine things arising uncaused, one cannot really believe this is true. While there is truth in this argument, especially the premise that the ability to conceive of things coming into existence without a cause does not mean they really can, it may be questioned whether this shows it is a necessary truth. It may be asked why many people have a strong intuitive sense that things cannot come into existence without a cause.

Justification for the general population's intuitive sense about how things come into existence seems to be based in a universal, or nearly universal, experience that everything which comes into existence has a cause. One can almost always find a cause for an entity or event if one looks hard enough. As Craig writes, "Constantly verified and never falsified, the causal propositions may be taken as an empirical generalization enjoying the strongest support experience affords."²⁹

Perhaps it is this near universal experience, that everything in the universe acts according to a law structure, that makes a person's intuition about how and why things come into existence so prevalent. If things frequently came into existence for no reason which could be determined, then it would be probable for a person's intuition to be different, or at least the original intuition would not be universally strong. For example, Quentin Smith argues against this maintaining that the intuition is not necessary or universal and argues that virtual particles come into existence without a cause.³⁰ Based on Smith's theory, the belief that our intuitions prevent us from believing things cannot come into existence without a cause, is false. I find no problem with the concept of things coming into existence without

a cause provided that God does not exist. Indeed, it seems quite possible to me. If the intuition (and I'm sure intuitions differ on this matter) that things cannot come into existence without a cause is not universal and incorrigible, then it cannot be used as a strong argument.

The appeal to intuition is thus not conclusive, as at most, it only gives one some reason for thinking things cannot come into existence without a cause. However, Craig does offer arguments in favor of his position, the first of which is empirical. The evidence that causation is universal comes from all areas of experience. (With the somewhat controversial exception of some subatomic particles.) Hence, Craig argues it is "completely arbitrary"³¹ to suppose things can arise without a cause. The fact that everything, or almost everything, in the universe has a cause according to a certain law structure is very significant. Based on the empirical evidence, it certainly seems rational to believe the universe, for example, must have had a cause for its coming into existence. However, the proposition in question is whether it is a necessary truth that nothing can come into existence without a cause. The empirical evidence alone cannot prove this. For even were it true in the actual world that nothing arises without a cause, it may be true that in other worlds things come into existence without a cause all the time. Therefore, Craig's argument from empirical data, although significant, does not prove it is necessarily true that things cannot come into existence without a cause.

Craig's final argument for the necessity of the causal principle is a Kantian one. Craig defends the position that there are categories in the mind through which one necessarily knows the world. He also supports the unKantian position that the world is structured according to these categories, and that one can therefore know the world as it is. Craig states:

Since the categories are objective features of both thought and reality and since causality is one of these categories, the causal relation must hold in the real world, and the causal principle would be a synthetic a priori proposition. It is a priori because it is universal and necessary, being a pre-condition of thought itself. But it is synthetic because the concept of an event does not entail the concept of being caused.³²

It should be noted that Craig only tentatively holds to this argument. The above argument has relevance to the contention that causation is a necessary category of one's thought. However, as argued, it seems possible to think and believe that things can arise without a cause. This being the case, if causality is one of the categories of the mind, it is not true that one cannot think without using it. Thus, the universality and necessity of causality is not thereby established.

Even if causality were a necessary and universal precondition of all human thought, it would not automatically follow that causality is a universal and necessary feature of reality. Kant denied this thesis, for he thought the categories applied to the mind only and not to the world itself. However, one need not agree with Kant's thesis to question the concept that because the category of causation is intrinsic to the mind, it is therefore universally and necessarily true of the external world. Even

if one had to think that causation was universal and necessary, it does not follow that it is. It would have to be presupposed that everything one universally and necessarily thought was also universal and necessarily true in the external world. Why couldn't humans necessarily think that usually nothing arises without a cause with some exceptions? If this were true, then the structure of the human mind would at some point mislead one. Yet, how can one know this is happening when it is being posited that our minds are constructed in such a way as to necessarily think in a certain manner?

The tentative conclusion is, apart from God, no strong reason exists to believe that necessarily, nothing can arise without a cause. It is not being maintained that things can arise without a cause, nor is the belief that it is rational for such things to occur. Rather, it has been asserted that one cannot immediately *prove* everything must have a cause in order to come into being. If God exists, it is plausible to think that nothing can arise without a cause. In addition, if the necessary universe theory is true, then everything must have a cause of its origination. Even if it can't be shown it is impossible for things to come into existence without a cause, it certainly seems rational to believe they can't. As Craig argues, our whole experience, or at least most of our experience, is that things do not arise without a cause. The statement that the universe itself came into being without a cause is hard to fathom, as the universe in its original infinitesimal material state expanded to become everything which exists. That this complex, all encompassing structure arose for no reason at all, as Quentin Smith³³ and others hold, seems completely unbelievable to me. Thus, Craig's argument, although not as strong as he believes, is nonetheless a powerful claim as the alternative is extremely implausible.

The same can be said of the different cosmological arguments, including those which argue things must have a cause of their continued existence and not just of their coming into being. Although I have criticized the notion that one can know *a priori* that everything must have a cause or reason to exist, this doesn't mean I believe the arguments are worthless. No attempt will be made to provide a detailed defense of the arguments, but a few remarks are in order.

Consider the implications of not accepting the principle that things must have a cause to exist. It is virtually universally admitted that almost everything, if not everything, has a cause of its coming to be, or of a change in it. With the controversial exception of certain subatomic particles or events, everything has a cause of its coming into existence, or its existing in the manner it does. Considering this, causation, even if not necessary, is nearly universal at least at the higher level of causation in beings. However, to deny things have a cause for their continued existence commits one to the position that all beings at the lower level of existence, exist for no reason at all. In short, the whole universe, a system of incredibly complex causation that is apparently universal would exist without a cause. Indeed, every being which exists has no reason for its existence. Thus, at the higher level causation is universal, or nearly so, and on the lower level there is no causation. This whole scheme seems wildly implausible.

In spite of this, the view that everything ultimately exists without a cause, except

for universal causation existing at the higher level, is very popular. In actuality this is the majority view. Why doesn't this view strike philosophers as implausible? I believe there are two reasons, the first being the view that although the universe did not have to exist, there is still a nomic structure which governs the activities of everything that does exist. Thus, even though the existence and particular nomic order of the universe are contingent, once in place, they operate out of necessity. The second reason is simply that to many minds, whatever implausibilities lie in the theory that the universe exists contingent and uncaused, the existence of God is even more implausible.

It should not be concluded from the above discussion that I believe things can arise without a cause or it is not rational to argue that some version of PSR or the PEC are not true. In fact, I think versions of the PSR and the PEC principles are true. What I am arguing is the only way to 'prove' these principles are true is by showing God exists. Apart from God's existence, the knowledge that these principles are universally or necessarily true is unknown.

The final point to be considered is that this shows the necessity in causation must be synthetic rather than analytic. As Craig himself states, "[I]t [the necessity of causation] is synthetic because the concept of an event [or finite being] does not entail the concept of being caused."³⁴ Thus, any reason or cause of the existence of finite contingent beings must come from outside these beings. Hence, causation cannot be shown to be necessary simply by an examination of the caused entity.

In chapter two the concept of a factually necessary God was examined. The strong definition of this being asserted there was only one world where such a being did not exist; the empty world. It is argued by some that because of the PEC, no finite beings could exist in any world where God did not exist. Thus, all worlds which had beings other than God, also had God in them and the only world where God did not exist was the empty world. However, upon examination of the PEC, it can be seen this is not true. If there is no LNG, and contingentP beings do not necessarily need a cause or reason for their existence, then there are worlds where such beings exist and God, defined as the FNG, does not. Hence, the strong version of the FNG is false.

It is at this point I shall return to the teleological argument. Much of what has been said about the cosmological argument is applicable to the teleological argument as well. Richard Swinburne's argument regarding this concept shall be examined first. His argument runs thusly:

(5.34) The universe is an extremely orderly and uniform place.

(5.35) It seems greatly probable, that were it left on its own, the universe would be chaotic. That is to say, it seems much more probable that the universe be chaotic than it be very orderly and uniform, because there seems to be no reason why the objects of the universe would always act in conformity to the same laws or any laws if their behavior was ungoverned.

(5.36) The best explanation for this is that there is a God who is the **cause of the** orderliness and uniformity that are such striking aspects of the universe.

(5.37) Therefore, God exists.³⁵

The problematic premise appears to be (5.46), where it is stated it seems greatly probable if the universe were left on its own it would be chaotic rather than orderly. I, in fact, accept this premise and will defend it in chapter eight. The crucial point is whether this premise can be denied without absurdity, that is, can a person be within his or her epistemic rights in rejecting it? The answer, as far as the argument provided here is concerned, is yes. The question which will be addressed is whether orderliness can be produced by unintelligent causes. It is not immediately evident that orderliness can only be produced by intelligent causes. To quote Bruce Russell on this matter, "Now, opponents of the design argument have argued that many instances of orderliness were produced by unintelligent causes, e.g., billions of stars and atoms being produced by unintelligent physical forces."³⁶

As many instances of order being produced by unintelligent causes exist, the defender of the design argument must show either (A) that the ultimate unintelligent physical causes were produced by intelligence, and thus the opponent of the design argument is begging the question when he states some kind of order is produced by unintelligent causes, or (B) that the ultimate regularities of nature cannot be given naturalistic explanations, and thus deny these regularities are produced by unintelligent causes. To quote Russell again, "It is impossible to show that a Divine intelligence did not *ultimately* produce any given instance of orderliness in nature. So it is impossible to show that many more instances of orderliness in nature are such that intelligence did not, rather than did, produce them."³⁷

This means it is impossible to show that some kind of orderliness in nature is or is not produced ultimately by God. Therefore, it is impossible to use different kinds of orderliness in calculating the probability that orderliness is more likely to be produced by God. If some kinds of orderliness are not produced by God, then one knows unintelligent causes can produce order. However, one cannot confirm or disconfirm that the fundamental regularities of nature are the product of God. Due to this, the fundamental regularities of nature cannot be used to say order, can or cannot, come about by chance. Hence, there is no way to estimate probabilities. These arguments, when argued in an a posteriori manner, eliminate both (A) and (B). States Russell:

There is no way to confirm the claim that many of the fundamental regularities of nature occur by chance and so no way to falsify the claim that the probability is small that the fundamental regularities would occur whether or not there was a Divine Intelligence. . . . there is also no way to falsify the claim that the probability is so small that some other sort of orderliness in nature was *ultimately* produced by Divine Intelligence. Hence there are no empirical grounds for accepting the conclusion that of the design argument if either the orderliness to be explained is that found in the fundamental regularities of nature or the hypothesis is that a Divine Intelligence

ultimately produced an instance of orderliness in nature. On the other hand, if the regularities to be explained are not the fundamental regularities and the hypothesis is the narrower one that a Divine Intelligence produced, in the sense of being the proximate cause of, orderliness in nature, then the design argument fails since there are so many instances of orderliness in nature whose proximate causes we know are unintelligent physical objects, processes or forces.³⁸

The crucial premise in the design argument which was outlined above is uncertain. Therefore, this version falls short of being a proof, at least until some way can be found to establish the premise as being true.

Robert Gange's argument will be examined next. Briefly, it states there is vastly more information in living beings than in the non-biological universe, and according to the latest version of the second law of thermodynamics there is always loss of information relative to an observer.³⁹ Gange's crucial premise in the argument is, "In the words of the New Generalized Second Law, an observer functioning within a closed system will lose, but never gain, information. In essence, this result follows from the fact that all measurements yield incomplete information; an observer's uncertainty increases with the passage of time . . . *Entropy is this uncertainty*."⁴⁰

Ultimately, there must be another source of information in the universe than just the non-living material, or chance. (With chance meaning the absence of a reason.) However, the loss of information relative to the observer might be questioned. If this is true, it may only be contingently true; it is not a priori a necessary truth. Worlds might exist where there is always a gain of information relative to an observer. Since the truth of this premise is contingent, this argument is not necessarily true. That is, there may be worlds, even this one, where, in the past or future, it was or will be, false. If so, then perhaps sometime in the past the law was different and the universe was 'wound up'. This does not in fact sound very plausible, however it seems at least epistemically possible, and therefore it prevents this argument from being a proof in the strict sense of the word.

The final teleological argument to be examined is from the anthropic nature of the universe. This argument relies on the specific nature of the laws of the universe. Basically stated, the laws of the universe exist in a manner which enables life to exist. Very few possible sets of laws would allow life to exist. Therefore, the argument runs, it is a more reasonable proposition that the universe was created by God than that it came about and exists by chance.

The major alternative to this argument is the World Ensemble. As John Leslie states, "Now, much evidence suggests that Life's prerequisites could only amazingly have been fulfilled anywhere unless this is a truth: *that God is real and/or there exist vastly many, very varied universes*."⁴¹ Unless theists can disposed of the World Ensemble argument in which a vast amount, perhaps even an infinite number of different universes with different law structures is posited, the existence of God cannot be proven. This does not mean there aren't other considerations which support the anthropic principle towards theism. Nonetheless,

the topic of discussion here is if any proofs of God's existence from the teleological argument exist without additional support. Ultimately, it does not seem as though any exist.

Finally, the question is asked if one can rationally believe in God even though the teleological argument in its three versions are not proofs. The answer, as has already been stated, is yes. The arguments, though validly stated, fall short of proof. They do not immediately show the non-theist is being irrational in his or her commitment. The reason is because no matter how implausible denying some of the premises of the theistic arguments is, to many the existence of God is even more implausible. Each side, theist and non-theist, will fall back on their own plausibility structure, where things are judged in degrees of plausibility, and thus come up with different answers. This is a major reason why so many philosophical and other disputes go on interminably.

The cosmological and teleological arguments in their strongest contemporary forms have been shown to fall short of being proofs. The basic issue in their acceptance or rejection is the fact that people have different world-views and different plausibility structures which go along with them. In the case of rejection, the concept of God may seem less plausible than affirming that the universe exists for no reason at all. It is to this topic we must now turn.

CHAPTER 6

PRESUPPOSITIONS AND EVIDENCE

The various theistic arguments have been debated for centuries. An important reason for this is that different philosophers approach the same questions with very different presuppositions and world-views.

In chapter one the terms *world-view* and *noetic structure* were defined as being the same thing; a world-view is a maximal noetic structure. It is a structure of beliefs which contain all other less comprehensive noetic structures, but cannot, by its very nature, be contained in any other noetic structure. For example, a person's world-view would contain all of a person's beliefs on every subject, however a lesser noetic structure may only contain a person's beliefs on baseball. As most people have different beliefs on many different subjects, a person's maximal noetic structure will typically contain many different lesser noetic structures. These lesser structures will then be united in greater noetic structures which will finally be united in the maximal noetic structure. Lesser noetic structures may be contained in other lesser noetic structures.

The whole scenario may be viewed as a large box which has within it many different smaller boxes. The large box is a person's world-view, and the smaller boxes are the different noetic structures on different subjects. For example, a large box may contain a smaller box which is labeled science, and within that box would be other boxes, labeled biology, chemistry, astronomy, etc. Again, within the smaller boxes would be other boxes, e.g., within the box labeled astronomy there would be even smaller boxes which contained beliefs about the moon, the sun, Mars and so on. One thing this example cannot show is the fact a proposition may belong to different boxes. An example might be the proposition 'Copernicus discovered the earth moves around the sun' would be part of the boxes labeled history and astronomy. The point is that although analogies, such as the boxes within other boxes may be useful, they cannot capture the full complexity of the situation. However, the analogy can still be helpful. Throughout this work several terms will be used interchangeably, noetic structure, conceptual framework, hypothesis and theory. Although these do not have precisely the same meaning, they will be used

to denote the same things. The real difference will be between a maximal noetic structure, or world-view, and lesser noetic structures, or structures which are not all inclusive of a person's beliefs.

At this point a discussion of *religion* is necessary. Religion is a term which has several different meanings. The contemporary doctrine that religion is a category which is optional in a person's world-view is the definition which will be examined. Using the above example of boxes, religion would be one of the smaller boxes contained inside the large box, and everyone might not have this particular box. The large box labeled world-view contains different types of smaller boxes. One of these boxes holds knowledge about things in which one does not participate, such as head-hunting. Any knowledge about head-hunting would be within this box, even if one was not personally a head hunter, or did not believe in head-hunting. A different kind of box exists for subjects in which one personally believes and/or participates in. Hence, if one were a golfer, a belief/participation box would exist within the larger world-view box, and if one only knew about golf, but did not participate in it, a non-participation box would exist in the world-view box.

When it comes to the issue of religion, the most prevalent modern view is that religion is a non-participation box. That is, that while everyone has knowledge of religion, only some people are 'religious'. This is analogous to the golfing example, almost everyone has some knowledge of golf, but only some are golfers. Thus, the prevailing view about religion is that one can take it or leave it.

However, this prevailing modern view is misleading. Religion is not one small box like golf, rather religion is the big box, indeed, it is the same thing as the world-view. Thus everyone is religious, and religion is a necessary factor in all thought. As this conclusion will be strongly resisted by many it becomes necessary to justify reasons for its acceptance. If one examines a religion, such as Christianity, one finds, among other things, beliefs about reality and our purpose in it. It covers the most fundamental questions one can ask. It and other religions provide a systematic overview of the nature of man and the universe, as well as the ultimates. Anyone with a sufficiently developed world-view will have beliefs about such matters. Indeed, a well-developed world-view will have beliefs which involve questions such as 'what is the most basic being', and 'what purpose should human beings pursue'. All religions provide answers to these questions, though the answers themselves will differ dramatically from world-view to world-view.

Various secular philosophies such as Marxism, Objectivism, or Humanism are equivalent to religions. At the base of every world-view or religion, are fundamental choices which have been made and radically different visions of what reality is like. Some may refuse to name their own particular world-view religion; religion for them is something which is inextricably tied to theism or the supernatural and often has a very negative connotation. But if a commitment to a version of philosophic naturalism is not accepted as a religion, it may still be called a religion equivalent.

Moving forward with the concept of noetic structures, one comes to something which may best be called a *probability structure*. A probability structure is the part

of the noetic structure which judges the likelihood of something occurring. Different probability structures exist dependant upon the different noetic structures a persons possess. For example, let us use the analogy expressed above that a person's beliefs about baseball is part of their lesser noetic structures. Suppose Smith has, as part of his noetic structure about baseball, the belief that *the Tigers are the best team in professional baseball*. Accordingly, he will have a probability structure concerning baseball which contains as highly probable the proposition that *the Tigers will win the world series*. On the other hand, suppose Jones has, as part of her noetic structure, the belief that *the Tigers are the worst team in professional baseball*. In this case, she will have as part of her probability structure concerning baseball the belief that *it is very unlikely the Tigers will win the world series*. This statement would be true unless she also had other beliefs such as, *the Tigers have bribed all the umpires in professional baseball*. Probability structures are also composed of propositions. They are structures, which based on the propositions already believed to be true, give one an estimate as to the probability of other propositions being true. Indeed, one's probability structure is a special part of one's noetic structure.

Many other beliefs, such as beliefs about the likelihood of miracles are determined by the probability structure of the different world-views of different thinkers. The crucial point is there are differences in the way people judge the probability or plausibility about the truth of certain propositions, and these judgments are made on the basis of the noetic and probability structures which are believed in. This is not true for every proposition. It is here a distinction must be made between objective or logical probability and epistemic probability.¹ Objective probability will mean the probability which is analytic to the nature of the case, and must be judged so by any rational mind, irrespective of what noetic or probability structure they hold. That is assume one has a fair, which is an unweighted, six sided die, then, in the absence of any other factors which would favor one result over any others, there is a one in six chance that the die will come up a six. This is analytic to anyone who accepts the basic laws of logic and is named logical probability.

There is also epistemic probability. This is a probability which is controlled by the noetic and probability structures of each individual. For example, the difference in belief between Smith and Jones on the matter of the Tigers winning the world series is subjective or epistemic, in that each evaluates the probabilities differently because their noetic structures are different. There is still objectivity of a sort here. For Smith may think while it is true the Tigers are the best team in professional baseball, and as such have an excellent chance of winning the world series; he might also think that if Jones were correct and the Tigers were the worst team in professional baseball, then her judgement that they have little chance of winning the world series would be correct.

The distinction between logical and epistemic probability is not the same as the distinction between necessary and contingent truth. Beliefs in necessary truths can have epistemic probability. For example, it may be necessarily true that human minds are essentially material, in which case it is necessarily false that human

beings are immaterial. (Which is the current orthodoxy.) But, some hold that human minds are essentially immaterial, in which case it is necessarily false that they are material. The judgment of different philosophers is based, at least partially, on their different noetic and probability structures. For example, if one is a physicalist, the notion that human beings are immaterial, let alone essentially immaterial, will seem impossible, or at least very implausible. This is because accepting such a belief would require a large change in the physicalist's noetic structure; basically, physicalism would have to be abandoned.

The difference in noetic and probability structures has a large and widespread impact on a great number of issues. It is a major reason why so many philosophic and other disputes are so interminable. Take for example the debate on the a priori probability of miracles. Hume's famous essay on the miraculous initiated many debates about the improbability of miracles and about the amount of evidence required to be rationally justified in accepting the existence of a miracle. J.L. Mackie argues the burden of proof lies heavily on the defender of miracles. He states:

Where there is some plausible testimony about the occurrence of what would appear to be a miracle, those who accept this as a miracle have the double burden of showing both that the event took place and that it violated the laws of nature. But it will be very hard to sustain this double burden. For whatever tends to show that it would have been a violation of natural law tends for that very reason to make it most unlikely that it actually happened.²

Mackie believes induction is responsible for the difficulty in proving the proponents of miracles. He writes, "[I]f the event reported is a miracle, it must be literally contrary to the laws of nature, it must contradict the conclusion of an induction of maximum strength."³ In addition, "[T]he defender of a miracle. . . must in effect *concede* to Hume that the antecedent improbability of this event is as high as it could be, hence, that is, we have the strongest possible grounds for believing that the alleged event did not occur."⁴ Mackie argues the proponent of the miraculous is on the horns of a dilemma. In order to maintain the concept of miracle, the defender of the miraculous must assert the notion that one is aware of existing natural laws. But if he adopts this stance, then he must say an event has happened which goes against a natural order which is supported by maximal induction. This makes it very unlikely that belief in any miracle could ever be empirically sustained. Finally, Mackie states if both of the parties in some controversy over miracles were theists, then it might be reasonable to look at how some particular miracle had happened. But, "[I]t is pretty well impossible that reported miracles should provide a worthwhile argument to those who are initially inclined to atheism or even to agnosticism."⁵ For those not committed to theism, the antecedent probability of miracles is so low they can never be affirmed.

Another atheistic philosopher who has argued against miracles is Michael Martin. Martin has several arguments against miracles, but his major point against them

contains the following:

In sum, the advocates of the hypothesis that event E is a miracle (H_m) must show that H_m is more probable than the following:

(6.1) (H_s) Event E will be explained by future scientific progress when more laws governing nature_n are discovered.

(6.2) (H_g) Event E seems incompatible with the laws that govern nature but it is not.

(6.3) (H_n) Event E is uncaused.⁶

The key concept is that of *being more probable than* and brings one to Baye's theorem which can be expressed as:

$$P(h/e.k) = \frac{P(h/e.k) \times P(h/k)}{P(e/k)}$$

P represents the probability of something, h represents the probability of a theory being true given evidence e , while k is the general background knowledge to all of this. As Richard Swinburne writes, " $P(h/e.k)$ is a function of the prior probability of h , $P(h/k)$; and of its explanatory power with respect to e ."⁸ $P(e/h.k)$ is a measure of how likely the evidential phenomena e are to occur if hypothesis h is true.⁹ $P(e/k)$ measures the prior probability of e , how likely e is to occur anyway, whether or not h , given only k .¹⁰ With this theorem one can calculate the probability of different events. However, things aren't always this simple. For as can be seen above, the prior probability of some hypothesis h is dependent upon k , the background knowledge. But what the background consists of is often highly controversial. For example, in the question of the miraculous, does the background knowledge include the existence of God? The existence of God makes a large difference in k , and thus in the whole calculation. As Mackie himself states above, whether one accepts the existence of God prior to the investigation of the miraculous makes a large difference. Therefore, no univocal answer exists to the question of how probable miracles are. The probability differs according to the background information and thus from the different noetic structures.

When debating the issue of theism versus atheism, Mackie and Martin find miracles have little or no evidential value. This is because atheism does not allow for miracles. The term 'miracle' has been tentatively defined as a suspension of natural law by God or some other supernatural being. Therefore, if one does not accept the existence of supernatural beings, miracles will be impossible. If one defines a hundred per cent probability as 1 and 0 per cent probability as 0, then on an atheist world view the probability of miracles will be 0. Why then do many atheists say miracles are improbable rather than impossible (as they are when speaking strictly from an atheistic probability structure)?

Three reasons exist to explain why atheists believe miracles are improbable rather

than impossible. First, if one defines miracles as suspensions of natural law by a supernatural power such as God, miracles would then be ruled out, but other unusual events would not. For example, it is possible, though incredibly unlikely, that all the molecules of air in a room would move upward at the same time. If this were to happen, the furniture in the room might levitate off the floor. If this happened at the same moment Smith, thinking himself to be a prophet providing a sign said, 'furniture, levitate!' then the levitation would appear to be a miracle, yet in actuality would be caused by an unlikely happening of natural factors. From the point of view maintained by most atheists, it seems possible for the laws of nature to be disrupted for a particular period of time or at particular place. Based on this possibility, a man might rise from the dead because the laws of physics are temporarily changed, not by God or some other supernatural entity, but ultimately just as a brute fact. As most atheists believe the reason the laws of nature exist is simply in the final analysis a brute fact, there is nothing incoherent about a brute fact suspension of the laws of nature. Therefore, from an atheist viewpoint, if a man were to rise from the dead, it would not be a miracle.

Second, most people, in most circumstances, will at least admit to the epistemic possibility that they are wrong. Hence, when the atheist says it is possible, albeit extremely improbable, for a miracle to occur, they are admitting to the possibility that atheism is false and some sort of God exists. Finally, an atheist might reject the existence of God, and yet affirm the existence of some other supernatural being. If one defines miracles as the suspension of the laws of nature by a supernatural being, then if some lesser supernatural suspends some law of nature at a particular time, it would be a miracle. This may not be a common position, for if one rejects the existence of God, then one typically rejects the existence of other supernatural entities; but it is at least a possible position.

Atheists believe the *a priori* probability of miracles is low because of their world-view. But what about theists? Here the situation is different, but in some cases not as different as one might expect. Theism will ordinarily confer a much higher *a priori* probability for miracles than atheism, however there are exceptions. For example, one could believe God exists, but never works miracles. Deists of the 18th century seemed to hold such a belief. In this case, the *a priori* likelihood of miracles will be 0, as it was for the atheist. Let us consider a particular alleged miracle, such as the resurrection of Jesus. This miracle has probably engendered more study and debate than all of the others combined. If one were an atheist, the probability of God performing a miracle which enabled Jesus to arise from the dead would be 0. The same probability rating would apply if one were a Muslim, for the simple reason that the belief Jesus did not rise from the dead is analytic to Islam (or at least is strongly supported). The Koran specifically states Jesus was never crucified, since God would never allow his prophets to be treated in such a manner.¹¹ On the other hand, it is analytic to Christianity that Jesus did rise from the dead.¹² Hence, from the Christian world-view, the *a priori* probability of Jesus rising from the dead is 1.

Given this is it possible, for example, for a Christian and an atheist to rationally

discuss the historicity of the resurrection? While technically the answer to this question is yes, there are several problems. First, the Christian and the atheist will view history differently as Christianity and atheism are opposing world-views. Writing of this difference, Cornelius Van Til states, "Reason employed by a Christian always comes to other conclusions than reason employed by a non-Christian. There is no agreement on the faith principle that is employed. Each has his own conception of reason and his own conception of faith."¹³

Van Til is not saying a Christian and an atheist would never agree on anything, rather when it comes to the conception of reality as a totality, he finds inevitably differences. Even though the two may agree there is a chair in the corner, they will disagree with what this means. The Christian will see the chair as a being which was created and is sustained by God, and which plays a part in his purposes. The atheist will see the chair as a being composed of matter which has either always existed or which came into existence for no reason, and which exists as a brute fact. In addition, the Christian and the atheist will be operating within radically different noetic and probability structures. The very conception of what it means to be reasonable, for example, will differ between the two. For the atheist, being reasonable means accepting as the ultimate authority the judgment of autonomous reason. For the Christian on the other hand, ultimate authority lies in God.

There is a large amount of overlap in the procedures of Christians and atheists in many different areas. For example, in writing a history of Napoleon, a Christian and an atheist historian might write works which are very much alike. Given the huge difference in the overall noetic structures, this may seem surprising. But the fact is both must live in the same world with much the same faculties so there is much commonality of belief. If some world-view or lesser noetic structure rejects logic, then that noetic structure is incoherent and false. Further, if some world-view or lesser noetic structure rejects the general reliability of sense experience, then that noetic structure will probably turn out to be incoherent, and therefore false. Again, most people accept the discipline of history as a method of obtaining truth. Both sides must be able to accept the fact that truth can be discovered about historical events in order for it to be considered a legitimate discipline. If there is some world-view which does not accept historical research as a legitimate way of discovering the truth about the past, then obviously history cannot be used as a tool to justify the truth of a particular event. However, if a world-view rejects the premise that truth can be discovered about the past, then it seems probable for some incoherence to be necessarily involved in that world-view--though proving this cannot be attempted here.

Granting this, it seems difficult or even impossible to believe there could be any agreement between atheists and Christians. For example, in the case of the resurrection, someone operating in the atheist world-view would give the a priori probability of the event as 0, or at very close to 0, if the tack taken is that what happened was some sort of unusual natural event. Someone operating in the Christian world-view would give the a priori probability as 1. There could not be a greater disagreement. How then can the different probabilities be adjudicated?

When dealing with clashing probability structures the answer is to decide the case as if it were philosophically neutral. For example, when dealing with the historicity of Napoleon, the reason both the atheist and the Christian come to close agreement is that neither has any philosophical objections to the historicity of Napoleon. The resurrection should be looked at as any other event, such as 'Napoleon fought the battle of Wagram'. After the amount of historical support for the event has been determined by this historical methodology, one may apply it to the different probability structures. In other words, one starts from the area of agreement, and then after having reached a verdict, one moves to the area of disagreement. If, for example, the historical evidence for the resurrection is strong, it supports the Christian position, and undermines the atheistic position, while a negative historical verdict would have the opposite effect. Thus, historical evidence can help decide between opposing probability structures. Richard Swinburne writes:

[I]f there are two hypothesis h_1 and h_2 such that $P(e/h_1, k) = P(e/h_2, k)$, then $P(h_1/e, k) > P(h_2/e, k)$ if and only if $P(h_1/k) > P(h_2/k)$. This says that if h_1 and h_2 both make it equally probable that we will find evidence e , given background knowledge k , then one of them h_1 will be more probable than the other on the total evidence e and k , if and only if h_1 was more probable than h_2 on the background evidence alone.¹⁴

Let us consider two hypotheses, h_1 and h_2 . If we hypothesize that both of these explanations have equal explanatory power relative to the evidence, then it is the background evidence which will make the difference. But this brings in the problem of exactly what is the background knowledge. If the background knowledge is such that h_1 is better supported by it than h_2 , then this can be counterbalanced by the evidence e favoring h_2 , and vice versa. However, in dealing with arguments between differing noetic structures with greatly differing probability structures, one should hold k to be equal because the different parties will give different estimates of k . The issue should be decided on e , and then a determination should be made about which hypothesis is better supported.

This leads to what might be called the 'leprechaun' problem'.¹⁵ This problem is basically when people devalue strong evidence against their position because to them the alternative seems implausible, just as the existence of leprechauns seems improbable. For example, biologist Richard Shapiro writes:

Some future day may yet arrive when all reasonable chemical experiments run to discover a probable origin for life have failed unequivocally. Further, new geologic evidence may indicate a sudden appearance of life on earth. Finally, we may have explored the universe and found no trace of life, or processes leading to life, elsewhere. In such a case, some scientists might choose to turn to religion for an answer. Others, however, myself included, would attempt to sort out the surviving less probable scientific explanations in the hope of selecting one that was still more likely than the remainder.¹⁶

Shapiro is saying that no matter the evidence as to the origin of life, he chooses

to interpret reality through a naturalistic perspective. Even if the odds for a naturalistic origin of were infinitesimal, Shapiro would still accept the naturalistic account of life's origin rather than consider 'religion' (theism). This is as clear an example of a faith commitment as one can find, and shows how difficult it can be to convince a person that their world-view is false.

The *epistemic probability distance* can be defined as the fact that certain beliefs seem more or less probable according to one's probability structure. For example, consider again the resurrection of Jesus. If one is operating in the Christian world-view and probability structure, then the resurrection will be certain. Any doubts are just that; the thought that one's noetic structure might possibly be wrong. If one is an atheist or a Muslim, on the other hand, the *a priori* probability of God raising Jesus from the dead is 0, *which is about the same probability as the a priori probability of leprechauns*. Therefore, on this matter, the distance between the Christian world-view and the atheistic and Islamic world-views are the same--which is maximal. On other things, however, the difference between Islam and Christianity is much smaller, has a much less epistemic probability distance, than between atheism and Christianity. This is because on most issues, and as a whole, Christianity and Islam are much more alike than Christianity and atheism. Now consider the plain theist. The plain theist believes in God, but does not attach to any particular positive religion. What, for the plain theist, is the *a priori* probability for the resurrection of Jesus? In this case, the number would be somewhere between 0 and 1, though exactly where is impossible to say. The plain theist believes in a God who could work miracles, and this allows for the possibility of God raising Jesus from the dead, therefore the probability is greater than 0; but not being committed to Christianity, the plain theist does not embrace the resurrection, and therefore the probability is less than 1. In any case, the noetic distance between the Christian and the plain theist is clearly less than the distance between the Christian and the atheist.

Philosophers like Mackie and Martin may argue the real reason they put the *a priori* probability of miracles so low is not because of the probability structure of their world view, but because of induction. Starting with the fact that everything or almost everything in this universe happens according to natural law, one moves via induction to the conclusion that everything happens according to natural law. If one saw billions of crows under different circumstances and at different times, and every last one of them was black, one would be justified via induction in thinking all crows were black. Thus, the argument that every event in the universe occurs according to natural law seems even stronger. For all events unfold according to the working of some natural law. There hasn't been one event which was universally admitted not to have occurred according to the mandate of natural law. When one goes to a drinking fountain, one doesn't see the water turning to wine, people can't walk across water and as has been pointed out, people do not ordinarily rise from the dead. With this as background knowledge, the opponents of miracles emphasize that inductively, the case against miracles is as about as strong as one could hope for. They maintain it makes miracles extremely improbable as so much

evidence would be needed, that practically speaking, there would never be enough. Miracles thus end up at the leprechaun level of improbability.

One way to defend miracles is to admit there is an antecedent improbability of miracles and then to try and show that for some particular miracle, there is enough evidence to overcome the initial improbability. There is some merit to this approach, for after all, even if there is a very high probability, based on induction, that all crows are black, the sighting of one albino crow would undermine it. I, however, suggest a different and more fundamental response, that the enemies of miracles are simply using induction when they should be using abduction. C.S. Pierce defined abduction (which he also called hypothesis and other things) as, "Hypothesis [abduction] is where we find some very curious circumstance, which would be explained by the supposition that it was a case of a general rule, and thereupon adopt that supposition."¹⁷ This may be explained more clearly by F.C. Copleston who wrote, "Abductive logic is predictive in character. That is to say, it formulates a hypothesis from observed facts and deduces what should be the case if the hypothesis is true. And we can then test the prediction [or retrodiction]."¹⁸ In short, in abduction, rival hypotheses are compared against the data and a determination is made as to which one contains the best explanation. This, it will be argued is the correct procedure for determining the truth of miracles.

The following text will demonstrate why abduction versus induction is the correct manner of investigation in the matter of miracles. Atheists like Mackie have typically argued that the massive inductive evidence which demonstrates the universe runs according to natural law makes miracles antecedently implausible. Let us consider another view, that of the Protestants in the years after the Reformation who believed miracles happened only during Biblical times. As most Protestants do not now hold this view, it will be termed the Old Protestant View (OPV). Whether it is theologically correct or not, it is clearly a possible belief, and as such, it undercuts the inductive argument against miracles. The lack of miracles today (if indeed it is true there are none), is equally coherent with atheism and the OPV. Therefore, the inductive argument against miracles does not support atheism, as there is at least one theistic hypothesis which explains the lack of contemporary miracles equally well. So, while the inductive argument against miracles may support atheism against a theistic view, it does not support atheism against the OPV. If the atheist responds that atheism is somehow more coherent with the evidence in some other way than the OPV is, then induction has been abandoned. The point of all this is if one has two hypothesis, h_1 , which is atheism, and h_2 , which is the OPV, then both explain the lack of contemporary miracles equally well. Thus, they cannot be decided upon by the evidence e . This leaves the background knowledge, k . However, it is some of this very background knowledge (such as the existence of God) which is in dispute. Hence, at this level one cannot decide if atheism or the OPV is the correct explanation for the lack of present day miracles.

With regard to past miracles, such as the resurrection of Jesus, where the two hypotheses differ in what they predict, one would have to establish the historical data and then determine whether the OPV or atheism explains the data more

coherently. Atheism will predict the historical evidence does not support the resurrection, while the OPV will predict it does. Therefore, historical evidence supporting the notion of Jesus rising from the dead, is also evidence for the OPV. Of course, the OPV is not the only theistic hypothesis. There is also the NPV, New Protestant View, which holds to miracles during biblical times and to the notion of miracles in modern times. The NPV and the OPV predictions would be exactly the same on the issue of the resurrection, therefore the difference between these views would have to be decided on other grounds. As previously stated, the NPV does believe in the possibility of modern miracles, yet doesn't endorse any one of them a priori. Each situation would have to be decided based on the evidence. Even on the terms of the NPV, the antecedent probability is against any one particular event being a true miracle. This is because most modern events are non-miraculous, and the fact that most alleged modern miracles have been disproved.

There is a difference between miracles which are analytic to a religion and those which are merely consistent with it. This difference is part of the larger point that some things are analytic, and therefore necessary to some world-view, while other things are merely consistent or inconsistent with it. It is incorrect to speak of the a priori probability of miracles in general because there is a difference in the a priori probability of specific miracles. Therefore, each individual miracle must be evaluated differently from different world-views.

At this point objections may be raised that induction is basic and prior to abduction. But such objections would be wrong. Abduction is the most basic of the two logics. As James F. Harris writes, "Pierce limits induction to the process of which we would now call confirmation-the process of confirming a hypothesis through observation of the particular instances deduced from the hypothesis."¹⁹ In other words, induction is limited to confirming what has been already predicted by the particular theory in the abduction. Abduction is thus logically prior and one must necessarily have a hypothesis before induction can be used to test it. The argument between the logical priority of induction and abduction is basically a decision between two hypotheses. This is itself a form of abduction. Another point is simply, induction cannot decide this issue. Inductive evidence would have to be shown to confirm one hypothesis over the other. In the case of atheism versus the OPV, it would have to be proven that the fact miracles do not now occur (assuming they don't) supports atheism rather than the OPV. However, the total absence of contemporary miracles is what the OPV predicts. How can a hypothesis be disconfirmed by certain empirical data, if that empirical data is exactly what the hypothesis predicts? In this case induction does not support one view over the other, and is therefore useless in deciding between them.

To state this another way, let us suppose there are two hypotheses H_1 and H_2 . Both of them are attempts to explain some set of data, $D_1, D_2, D_3, \dots D_n$. Suppose both H_1 and H_2 explain the data equally well, that is, both predict correctly what the data will be; neither is supported over the other. Only if there is some data, say D_i , which H_1 contains but H_2 does not, is one entitled to say H_1 is supported by the data over H_2 . To try to show induction confirms H_1 is true, while H_2 explains the data

equally well, would be question begging. Equally bad, or perhaps even worse, would be to assume the truth of H_1 before showing that the data supports H_1 over H_2 , and based on the assumption judge the antecedent probability of H_2 .

If one knew atheism were true, then one would be completely justified in assigning miracles a very low order of antecedent probability. However, the possibility of miracles cannot be summarily rejected when using them as evidence to decide between some variety of theism and atheism, as that would be begging the question. Mackie and Martin's other objections are also question begging. Mackie argued that the theist required the laws of nature to be construed very strongly to enable the concept of miracle to have meaning, however the stronger the laws of nature, the less likely miracles were to occur. On theistic grounds this argument is faulty. According to theism, the laws of nature are really just the way God causes the universe to behave. Hence, the laws of nature are the products of God's will and activity, and therefore do not stand independent of him.²⁰ Both the laws of nature and miracles come from the same hand, and do not contradict each other. One can have a strong belief in the near inviability of natural law without this entailing that miracles are improbable.

A miracle's a priori probability will be judged differently based on either a theistic point of view or an atheist point of view. The miracle of the resurrection of Jesus, for example, is analytic to Christianity. Based on a Christian point of view, it entails that Jesus miraculously rose from the dead, hence this would not be an undiscovered law of nature or a causeless event. From the atheist perspective it is analytic that Jesus was not raised by God. There is no univocal or universal probability structure on miracles; they are relative to world-views. When dealing with non-analytic miracles, the probability of a miraculous explanation as opposed to as undiscovered law explanation will vary from world-view to world-view. The NPV could be considered an alleged contemporary miracle, thus both the strength of the evidence and the context of the alleged event must be examined.

If there are two or more hypotheses which all explain some data equally well, the truth of one of the hypotheses cannot be assumed and then used to demonstrate the truth of that particular hypothesis. Yet this is exactly what their argument against miracles does. It argues that the hypothesis miracles never occur is supported by the fact (if it is a fact) that at the present everything happens according to natural law, when in fact there are other hypotheses which can explain this equally as well.

If the above argument is correct, why are miracles widely accepted as extremely improbable? Why is it held that only massive empirical evidence can justify a rational belief in miracles? Why are miracles generally held to be a leprechaun or even sub-leprechaun level of antecedent probability by many philosophers? There is more than one answer to these questions, but one of the most fundamental reasons is simply that many philosophers, both in the past and today, not only accept a naturalistic or atheistic world-view with its corresponding probability structure, but also take such a viewpoint for granted. Atheism, with its corresponding probability structure, is held to be the neutral and objective viewpoint, rather than one viewpoint among many. The atheistic view is treated as a launching point, even if

in the final analysis this viewpoint is rejected. The result is the basic enlightenment mode of thought, wherein objective truth can be obtained by means of impartial reason. It is believed that all investigation must begin with oneself, and then by using reason on the evidence of the senses, one can discover the objective truth about reality. As God is not an object present to our senses and is quite unlike any of the objects which are present to our senses, and since the world seems to run consistently on natural law, entities and events like God and miracles must be judged improbable. God and miracles can only be justifiably believed in with massive amounts of evidence. Realistically, for many thinkers, no amount of evidence would ever be enough to justify a belief in God or miracles.

Thus, for those in the enlightenment tradition, or what may be called *modernism*, the true starting point of all rational investigation is in objective, theoretical reason itself, which is *autonomous*. It is objective in the sense that it is allegedly neutral. It is theoretical in the sense that it is building conceptual schemes, or noetic structures, via reason based on experience. It is autonomous in the sense that it is lacking in any religious presuppositions. As a result of this objective, theoretical, autonomous reason come standards, such as the one which proclaims miracles are antecedently very improbable. As Herman Dooyeweerd writes, "Immanence-philosophy [that philosophy which takes its starting point upon some aspect of the created universe] in all its nuances stands or falls with the dogma of the autonomy of theoretical thought."²¹ Antony Flew, in his writing of the fundamental propositions about examining history and the historicity of miracles, states, "[H]istorians must employ as criteria all their present knowledge, or presumed knowledge, of what is probable or improbable, . . . since the word 'miracle' has to be defined in terms of physical necessity and physical impossibility, the application of these criteria inevitably precludes proof of the actual occurrence of a miracle."²²

As pointed out above, what is really being presupposed is the autonomy of theoretical thought. Basically stated this position is that one must begin with oneself and what one knows on the basis of one's own experience and reason. Flew and Hume assume one's probability structure is controlled by a nomically structured universe. However, the fact the world around us is orderly and lawful can be explained in a number of different ways, (although as we shall see in later chapters there is only one which is ultimately coherent). An orderly and lawful universe is consistent with theism in most of its varieties and does not mean that miracles per se are improbable. It is not the fact the universe is orderly which impels one to embrace an atheistic viewpoint, rather it is that atheism and its probability structure are presupposed. Thus, the improbability of miracles is derived from atheistic presuppositions. *Theoretical reason, on this question as on so many others, is not, and cannot be, neutral. Rather, it is guided by the different religious presuppositions that everyone necessarily has.* One learns that material entities exist and have the properties they have via sense experience. However, a probability structure is not an object of sense experience, rather it is a *theory*, or as described above, a noetic structure. It may be seen that the objects of one's sense experience act in an orderly manner. However, one can not see a probability

structure as such things are intellectual constructs, or theories, about how and why things act the way they do.

The three basic elements in knowledge are sense perception, logic, and world-view. People generally have the same basic sense perceptions, that is, they all perceive the world in pretty much the same way (although proving this may be harder than many think). The laws of logic are the same for everyone. However, the third element of knowledge, world-view, differs from person to person. People can agree that a particular tree exists because everyone can see and touch it. All can agree that the law of contradiction is true, for not only is it self-evident but is necessarily the basis of all thought. Yet, when it comes to the question of whether the universe is ontologically independent or not, there is no direct response. The truth of this matter depends upon one's world-view or theory of ontology. Such theories cannot be directly derived from sensation or the laws of logic. Both theism and atheism are logically coherent regarding the antecedent probability of the miraculous at this level. If not implied from sensation or the laws of logic, where are these noetic structures derived from? As Roy Clouser states:

[O]ne religious belief or another controls theory making in such a way that *the contents of the theories differ depending on the contents of the religious belief they presuppose*. In fact, so extensive is this religious influence that virtually all the major disagreements between competing theories in the sciences and in philosophy can ultimately be traced back to differences in their religious presuppositions.²³

The determination of one's theories or noetic structures will largely depend upon one's most fundamental beliefs or presuppositions; the superstructure is built upon the substructure. Facts which are revealed by sensation will have a large impact on a person's theories however, the interpretation which is given to these facts will be determined by the person's religious presuppositions. As previously noted, probability structures on such subjects as miracles cannot be deduced from either sensation or logic alone, or the two together.²⁴ There is an essential third component which is interconnected to, but independent of, both logic and sensation, the noetic and probability structures as a whole. As Dooyeweerd states, "If all philosophical currents that pretend to choose their starting-point in theoretical reason alone, had, indeed, no deeper presuppositions, it should be possible to settle every philosophic argument between them in a purely theoretical way."²⁵ Many philosophic disputes are interminable due to the fact the opposing parties are coming to the debate with differing noetic and probability structures.

Every person capable of considering or having an opinion on issues brings with them a specific noetic structure or world-view accompanied by a corresponding probability structure. If a person did not bring this component to the debate he would be unable to formulate an opinion as he would have no way of judging probability. So before considering the evidence on a particular issue, there must already be in place a noetic and probability structure. Probability is inherent in one's world-view and thus is used in judging the evidence.

There are several reasons, some social and some philosophic, why this is not understood by many philosophers. Philosophers in modern times have been so attached to philosophic naturalism, whose consensus has been in favor of these positions, that they believe this must be the position of all rational people. Thus, their positions have been 'neutral' and 'objective'. Philosophers in the English speaking world have been more interested in the perceptual issues of epistemology rather than issues like world-views. They have been examining the issues of how one knows that trees exist, how one can be justified in believing one's perception of one's husband is veridical, what the fact that one is appeared to redly means, etc. Less time has been spent examining the issues of noetic and probability structures. I do not mean to suggest, of course, there is a hard and fast division between perception and conception. Most, if not all, perception contains some conception, and most conceptions have perceptual elements in them. Nonetheless, these philosophers have been absorbed with the perceptual element in knowledge while some conceptual factors have been relatively unexamined.

Many philosophers, particularly of an atheistic variety, will object to having their perspectives deemed religious. Above, religion was defined as being equivalent to world-view. If one cannot accept this perspective then non-theistic world-views can be called religion equivalents. However, the naming of all world-views as religions can be justified as they are all matters of ultimate concern. All world-views contain some sort of being(s) that is divine and depends upon nothing else for its existence but upon whom all other things depend for their existence.²⁶ Considering this, it can be said that most contemporary philosophers of an atheistic mind-set believe in some type of, what might best be described as, paganism. Peter Gay argued that the enlightenment brought forth the revival of paganism in modern times.²⁷ In addition he argued modernism, especially modern secularism, naturalism and atheism, grew out of the enlightenment.

Clouser states, "The essential feature of the pagan dependency idea is that the divine is some part, aspect, force, or principle in the created universe. . . . the pagan dependency arrangement is that there is only one continuous reality, part of which is the divine segment on which all the rest depends."²⁸ Matter is considered by most contemporary atheists as that which is ontologically ultimate. Matter in this world-view, is that which depends upon nothing else for its existence and is itself the basis for the existence of everything. This concept is in contradistinction to theism, where God and the universe are at two different levels of being; God being necessary, self-existent, and transcendent to the universe rather than a part of it. What must be recognized is the atheistic system will, nonetheless, have its essential features parallel to a theistic system. Both premises are answering the same questions, even though the answers given are quite different. Atheists also have a faith commitment to their system which is used to explain the universe. Even when faced with contrary evidence atheists will not surrender this faith commitment, instead they work hard to refute the evidence. As David Bohm writes:

It seems clear that everybody has got some kind of metaphysics, even if he thinks he

hasn't got any. Indeed, the practical 'hard-headed' individual who 'only goes by what he sees' generally has a very dangerous kind of metaphysics, i.e. the kind of which he is unaware. . . . Such metaphysics is dangerous because, in it, assumptions and inferences are being mistaken for directly observed facts, with the result that they are effectively riveted in an almost unchangeable way into the structure of thought.²⁹

I would add not only does everyone have a metaphysics, but an epistemology and a value system as well, even if never expressed verbally or even recognized. The atheistic attack on miracles is founded on this premise. Hume, Flew, Mackie and Martin, among other are taking the probability structure of their own world-view and confusing it with straightforward observation and induction. They do not consider the possibility that they may be presupposing something which is world-view relative.³⁰

Objections may be raised which would attempt to demonstrate justification for adopting a non-theistic world-view and its plausibility structure when examining miraculous. One such objection finds something more basic or fundamental about atheism than Christianity or some other theistic system. Atheism, for example, does not assume the existence of any ultra-mundane entities. Instead, atheism adheres to the entities of one's common experience. Based on perception alone this argument runs atheism is a more natural explanation for miracles than theism. This is because atheism examines evidence based on the entities seen around oneself rather than some other totally different kind of entity, such as God.

The problem with this premise is that perception involves interpretation. Atheism is not an object of sensation. It is, like theism, an interpretation which is placed on sense perception. Atheists believe the universe is ontologically independent; that it depends upon nothing for its existence. In addition, they usually believe the existence of the universe is a 'Brute Fact'; it exists for no reason. These propositions are interpretations which are placed on the data revealed by perception to account for things being the way they are. Atheism therefore, has no advantage over theism, for both appeal to interpretations that cannot be directly comprehended through the senses. One cannot obviously perceive the universe is ontologically independent anymore than one can perceive the universe was created by God.

The existence and nature of the objects of perception can be explained in many ways. In addition of 'standard explanation,' William Alston includes these interpretations of sense objects:

(6.4) Cartesian demon explanation.

(6.5) Berkelyan God explanation.

(6.6) Alternative physical explanations.

(6.7) Panpsychist explanation.

(6.8) Self-generation explanation.³¹

All of these hypotheses or theories explain, *prima facie*, that we perceive objects through the senses as well as the standard theory does. Even though it may be intuitively obvious that the objects of sense perception exist as material beings, other interpretations can be given to them. Sense perception is not just perception, interpretation and theorizing are inextricably tied to it. Further, as Alston shows, it is difficult to prove the intuitive belief that the objects of sense perceptions are really material objects. Hence, intuitive knowledge comes before discursive justification, if indeed the later ever comes. The facts that the objects of sense perception act in a lawful manner and are radically different kinds of beings than God are predicted by theism. How then can they be used as arguments against theism?

To say atheism is more probable than theism because it is closer to our common experience is to invoke a particular kind of probability structure and thus is question begging against world-views like theism. This argument is simply a restatement of autonomous reason. Autonomous reason basically finds the individual human being is in his or her immediate environment has within them the probability standards by which to judge all reality. Consequently, the attitude exists 'if it's not like what seems right to me, or like what I see around me, then its not probable.' But this is not neutral.

Another objection is Occam's razor, which is the principle or parsimony that entities which are used as a means of explanation should not be multiplied needlessly. If one can explain some phenomena *P* with only 16 different entities, there is no reason to introduce a 17th. Working from this principle, it might be argued that atheism is a simpler world-view than theism because it contains less entities. Actually, the previous objection may be thought to be a form of Occam's razor as it contends that God is antecedently improbable, he is a radically different kind of being than the beings of our sensory experience. Occam's razor is directed primarily to the notion that atheism is simpler than theism and therefore, unless the existence of God can be proven it is assumed to be true. As B.C. Johnson writes:

Another point to note is that the atheist believes in the existence of the universe and does not believe in anything which is more fundamental. The theist believes in the existence of the universe and-in addition-he believes in the existence of God. The theist, therefore, believes in one more thing than the atheist. If all beliefs should be justified, then surely the more one believes, the more justification one must produce. Clearly the theist must justify this extra belief to the atheist. If, on the other hand, beliefs need not be justified, then we might as well give in to pure anarchy and admit that rational discussion is impossible.³²

Johnson believes an atheist is simply someone who does not believe in God, rather than someone who denies the existence of God. With this definition of atheism, Johnson and other atheists³³ attempt to put the burden of proof on theists. Johnson provides several analogies to prove his general point, an example of which is where one man states there is a giant man-eating frog in a nearby lake, and

another denies it.³⁴ Surely in this case, writes Johnson, the burden of proof would be on the man who asserted the existence of the frog.

The problem with this and Johnson's other examples is they are not really analogous to the problem of justifying world-views. They all deal with justifying the existence of some thing of sensory experience. Most world-views,³⁵ including most theistic world-views, would admit that in the case of giant man-eating frogs, the burden of proof would be on the one who asserts their existence. The main obstacle in believing giant man-eating frogs exist, is the fact that if they existed they should be possible to discover. Yet, in actuality none have been discovered. Thus, the noetic structures which holds to the existence of giant man-eating frogs is refuted a posteriori.

Often the person who denies the existence of something has the burden of proof on them. For example, suppose you are walking through a bakery when a pie is thrown in your face. There are two people who claim to have seen the incident, Smith and Jones. Smith claims one of a group of boys threw the pie, while Jones claims the pie just flew into your face of its own accord. Smith's story has more entities in it than Jones' does, but given the choice of these two stories one would hardly hold that the burden of proof is on Smith. (Of course, if one was arguing with a person who held to a noetic structure where pies flew into people's faces for no reason, he would not say the burden of proof was on him. But again, such a noetic structure would be faced with severe conceptual and empirical problems.) However as a rule, simpler explanations are considered true unless there is good some reason for denying it. Thus, Johnsons' point requires examination.

First, atheism as a world-view or metaphysical system is not necessarily simpler than theism. Although theism entails the existence of at least one more entity than atheism, e.g., God, atheism may be more complex in other ways. Atheists often maintain, for example, that the universe is infinite in time and space, whereas theists usually maintain the finiteness of the universe. In this case, atheism would be more complex than theism for it would entail an infinite number of events, while theism would only entail a finite number. Many atheists, under pressure from the scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning, are adopting the view that the universe has only existed for a finite amount of time. Still, the fact that atheists held to the view of an infinite universe shows they were willing to subordinate simplicity per se to other factors.

Second, the essence of Occam's razor is that *all other things being equal*, a simple explanation is rationally preferable to a complex one. Occam's razor is logically true, if and only if, X can explain Y just as well as $X + Z$ can explain Y . In this situation, Z would be superfluous. This is all Occam's razor validly states. If one being can explain the existence of some situation, there is no need to posit the existence of additional beings. Of course, if there is a *reason* to bring in additional beings, Occam's razor does not provide a reason to reject them. In the case of naturalism versus theism, all other things are not equal. In the universe posited by naturalism objects are self-existent, that is, ontologically independent. In theism, the universe is ontologically dependent. One cannot say it is simpler to have the

grounds for one's existence internal to oneself rather than external. Therefore, it is impossible to say if one concept is 'simpler' than the other. Hence, all things are not equal and Occam's razor does not work.

In the Middle Ages philosophers accepted Occam's razor because they believed God would always do the most perfect, and therefore the simplest thing, like creating the simplest possible laws to govern the universe.³⁶ Thus the principle originally had a theistic basis, and yet from a theistic viewpoint it could be considered dubious. Isn't it possible that God had other principles which he valued more than simplicity, such as creativity, beauty, or even complexity itself?

As theism is radically at variance with naturalism, Occam's razor is not applicable. Occam's razor is not a law of metaphysics. It is a rule which should govern beliefs based on certain amounts of evidence. All of this is subject to other factors, which differ from world-view to world-view. Hence, within world-views Occam's razor is not always valid due to other factors which might be involved, while between world-views differences are often great enough to invalidate the concept.

As noted above, Johnson thinks an atheist merely fails to believe in God, yet does not necessarily deny God's existence. In addition, he believes this puts the burden of proof on the theist. While the atheist is asserting the existence of God, he is not denying that God exists, rather he is just asserting that he does not know. This argument will not work as every person must have some sort of world-view, some structure of beliefs, just by virtue of the fact he is a rational being. The world-view may contain contradictions, be incomplete, and/or be unconsciously held, but it must still be there. Therefore every person must have some sort of probability structure. When dealing with concepts like miracles, where the laws of logic do not entail a specific probability structure, the a priori probability structure utilized to examine the evidence must be inherent in a person's world-view.

Consequently, there can be no neutral probability structure regarding miracles. When the atheist or even the agnostic approaches the question of miracles in particular or God in general, there will be some sort of probability structure whereby the antecedent probability of these concepts are judged. This probability structure cannot be assumed a priori without begging the question. A priori, the probability structure of the theist and the atheist or agnostic are, when investigating questions like the existence of God or miracles, on the same level.

Frequently, atheism is taken to be the basic or 'neutral' position which is assumed to be true unless there is strong evidence against it. An example of this is Antony Flew's essay "The Presumption of Atheism."³⁷ Flew defends several points, but the most relevant to the present discussion argues that the burden of proof is on those who assert the existence of something, rather than those who fail to believe in the thing's existence. However, as previously stated, this is not always true. Considerations about what is properly basic need to be looked at. For example, there is no onus of proof on those who assert the world has been in existence for over five minutes, even though those who assert the world has been around a long time are asserting the existence of a lot more entities. A person who accepts the

existence of other minds carries no burden of proof in contrast to the rival principle that all other human beings are just machines. This is true in spite of the complexity of the position that other minds exist. These concepts are rationally believed simply because they seem so obvious. If one has an intuitive awareness of God, then one will probably believe God exists. For such a person the burden or onus of proof will be on the atheist. He must show why one's intuitions are faulty. Hence, Flew's position is erroneous; there is no 'neutral' position. It could just as easily be said that the existence of God must be presupposed unless his existence could be disproven. The theist carries no special burden of proof. If the theist thinks the existence of God is self-evident or theism is a more sensible world-view than any other, there is no reason why these beliefs couldn't be presupposed as a starting point. All world-views must argue for their truth in order to be rationally supported against other world-views.

Flew's other arguments include that the concept of God is incoherent and that there is no sound argument for the existence of God. However, these arguments are a posteriori when considering the question of which world-view, theism or atheism, is considered to be antecedently more probable. That is, these considerations are only relevant after one decides whether theism or atheism is more antecedently probable. Of course, it is true that the coherence of God is a priori, in the sense that one can attempt to resolve it prior to experience. However, this is a different issue. It could as easily be said that if the cosmological argument is sound, then antecedent probability ought to be granted to theism. This is, as in the atheistic alternatives, getting the proper order reversed and putting the a posteriori before the a priori.

The objection may be raised that this makes things too easy for the theist. Let us examine the analogy of the famous Great Pumpkin. Most people might rate the antecedent probability of the Great Pumpkin at even less than that of Leprechauns. Yet the Great Pumpkinist might argue that if the antecedent probability of the Great Pumpkin is rated so low, one is begging the question against his viewpoint. Thus, the objection to the argument I have defended is that one can adopt any silly position and claim that initially it is entitled to as much respect as any other position. I must, in part, agree with this objection. If in arguing with a Great Pumpkinist, one assumes the antecedent (prior to investigation) improbability of Great Pumpkinism, then one has begged the question. *However, this does not mean one cannot say anything against it.* In the case of the Great Pumpkin, it could be argued that there are no substantiated sightings of him rising from a pumpkin patch at Halloween; a confession could be obtained from Charles Schulz stating he made the whole thing up; the coherence of the concept of a 'sincere pumpkin patch' could be questioned; it could be shown there is no increase in the number of toys good children receive at Halloween versus other times; the coherence of the concept of an intelligent, flying vegetable could be questioned, etc. In short, it could be shown that the world does not resemble the one Great Pumpkinism predicts. Just because one cannot beg the question against a silly position, does not mean one cannot argue against it all.

This brings up an important distinction, that of giving a judgment from one's own

world-view and deciding between rival world-views. For example, Keith Parsons commenting on Alvin Plantinga's notion that Satan and his minions may be responsible for natural evil writes, "Plantinga complains-justly I think-that his demon scenario has been unfairly scorned by those who consider it implausible, improbable, and wildly ad hoc. It is all these things, . . ." ³⁸ It is not totally clear from the context whether Parsons would consider just the existence of Satan implausible, or the whole demon scenario implausible, or both. Probably the latter. Let us consider just the existence of Satan. From an atheistic viewpoint the existence of Satan looks improbable at best. However, the Christian is likely to give a very different judgment. As Plantinga writes, "Plausibility, of course, is in the ear of the hearer." ³⁹ Everyone is entitled to make judgments from their own perspective. When this is done the truth of one's own beliefs are being presupposed. One can't be forever judging between the truth of rival world-views or other, more limited hypotheses. Necessarily, one must decide what is true, at least tentatively. The problem arises when one is debating the truth with a different perspective, or attempting to decide the truth between two or more world-views or lesser noetic structures. It is at this point that one cannot presuppose the truth of one's own favored viewpoint.

I believe many philosophers have a strong intuition that the more basic or natural world-view is atheistic naturalism. This is an illusion. Necessarily, everyone must have a world-view. However, there are no world-views which are, *at this level*, more basic or fundamental or intrinsically favorable than any others. The atheist may intuitively feel the atheistic viewpoint is the 'neutral' one and that if any other world-view is the true one arguments must be produced to prove it. Simply stated, anyone who firmly believes in their own view places the burden of proof on anyone wishing to refute their view. Other views will seem more or less implausible based on the noetic distance they have from the view held. The further a view is from one's own, the more effort or evidence will be required to change one's views. Let us assume there are three world-views, *A*, *B*, and *C*. Let *A* and *B* be more like each other than *A* and *C* are. If all other factors are neutral, then convincing one who believes in *A* to believe in *B*, will be easier or take less evidence to convince a believer in *A* that *C* is true. Again, this is because everyone has their own views and the more unlike these views other views are, the more implausible they seem.

Hence, much of what is often said about the implausibility or improbability of miracles and other things, is not really how objectively implausible they are (for there is not univocal probability on miracles and many other things), but rather a judgment passed by people who think, on the basis of their own world-view, that miracles or whatever are improbable and that this judgment should apply to everyone. It is, in effect, a judgment of how much evidence would be required for that person to change his or her views. However this is confusing a relative-objective judgment for a purely objective judgment.

A distinction must be made between the world-view and the people who believe in it. From the perspective of one world-view, another world-view will necessarily seem impossible. If this were true, one could never be converted from one world-

view to another, or from one lesser noetic structure to another. This is obviously false. When dealing with people who believe in a particular world-view or noetic structure a different dimension must be considered. People will generally admit they might be wrong, and on that basis, will admit another theory which is contradictory to the one they hold, is in fact true. It is this factor which makes conversions possible. If one holds to theory *X* on some matter, it is usually possible to test the theory by seeing how well it fulfills its predictions. In the case of baseball, if Smith thinks that the Tigers are the best team in professional baseball, while Jones thinks they are the worst, then the predictions of how many games they will win will differ greatly. If the Tigers lose the first 87 games of the season, then this corroborates Jones' theory and undermines Smith's, for it is a more likely situation given Jones' probability structure than Smith's. Smith, upon seeing this, may feel the pressure of not having reality conform to what he, on the basis of his noetic structure concerning baseball, would predict, and thus may change and switch to another noetic structure on this subject.

It might then be asked how people arrive at their views? In brief, everyone chooses the noetic structures and world-view which seems best to them. The meaning of best will differ from person to person. Regarding what he calls visions, Thomas Sowell writes, "A vision has been described as a 'pre-analytic cognitive act'. It is what we sense or feel *before* we have constructed any systematic reasoning that could be called a theory, much less deduced any specific consequences as hypotheses to be tested against evidence."⁴⁰

Thus, if one has a 'vision' of the universe which does not contain God, one will accept a world-view that does not contain God, and in which God will be an improbable entity, sometimes even to the point of being sub-leprechaun in antecedent probability. On the other hand, for those who find God's existence is self-evident,⁴¹ God will not only not be antecedently improbable, but any theory or world-view which denies him will seem antecedently improbable. Thus, in the debate about miracles or other topics related to the truth of theism, the theist, for whom the existence of God is self-evident, is asked nonetheless to assume that God's existence is antecedently improbable. This is, as we have seen, asking the theist to abandon his own plausibility structure and adopt the plausibility structure of atheism, all in the name of objectivity and neutrality. But there is no neutrality.

Another reason so many philosophers believe probability structures must be universal and neutral is the fear of falling into Relativism. Some may think the position defended in this chapter may be a form of Relativism. What then is Relativism? There is some dispute over this questions and over who exactly counts as being a relativist. Therefore, I will consider a 'strong' and a 'weak' form of Relativism, starting with a definition of strong relativism. Richard Bernstein thinks that Relativism

[i]s the basic conviction that when we turn to the examination of those concepts that philosophers have taken to be the most fundamental-whether it is the concept of rationality, truth, reality, right, the good, or norms-we are forced to recognize that in

the final analysis all such concepts must be understood as relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society or culture. Since the relativist believes that there is (or can be) a non-reducible plurality of such conceptual schemes, he or she challenges the claim that these concepts can have a determinate or univocal significance.⁴²

Others have offered a milder version of Relativism, linking it to the rejection of the principle of bivalence or excluded middle. Objectivism opposes Relativism and is defined by Bernstein as, "[t]he basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness or rightness."⁴³

Relativism, however defined, has been an extremely potent force in the later part of the twentieth century. James Harris writes that the second half of the twentieth century will go down in history as the age of Relativism or Post-Modernism.⁴⁴ In opposing Relativism he goes so far as to write that his "[B]ook represents something of a 'rear-guard action' for modernists who will hopefully gather their forces and mount some kind of counterattack in defense of reason and rationality against the onrushing tide of pernicious relativists."⁴⁵ Although Relativism is alleged to have gained prominence from the European philosophers, the fact is some Anglo-American analytic philosophers, including Quine, Goodman and Rorty, have been long considered associated with it.⁴⁶

I will examine Bernstein's strong form of Relativism first. According to Bernstein some relativists think there is no univocal, permanent, ahistorical method by which truth can be discovered and agreement reached. Hence, the best one can do is continue the conversation between the different philosophies. Bernstein attempts to move beyond both Objectivism and Relativism. He sees the problems with Relativism and attempts to provide a way around them without embracing Objectivism. If these views cannot stand up under examination, then 'strong Relativism' fails. Bernstein argues we should have "the ideal of unrestrained communication . . . that embraces all of humanity."⁴⁷ Further, he writes we have a vision that "[P]lurality does not mean that we are limited to being separate individuals with irreducible subjective interests. Rather it means that we seek to discover some common ground through debate, conversation and dialogue."⁴⁸

In brief, Bernstein sees a number of conceptual frameworks, all relative to specific groups and individuals. This is similar to any version of Relativism, but in contrast to strong Relativism, Bernstein thinks these groups and individuals can discuss and seek to rationally persuade others with different conceptual frameworks. The different conceptual frameworks can be tested in various ways. This he states, moves one beyond Objectivism and Relativism.

The problem with this premise is either there is a standard of judgment which is objective and necessary to all frameworks, or there is not. If there is, then some sort of Objectivism is true. For example, if the basic laws of logic have universal validity then there is at least that much objectivity, for no framework could be

meaningful without following them. Any framework, to be coherent, necessarily follows the laws of identity and contradiction. If it did not, it would not be meaningful. Indeed, the very concept of framework is only intelligible with such concepts as a framework is something with a structure which includes some things and excludes others. Since it is true that nothing meaningful can be stated without the validity of the laws of identity and contradiction being presupposed as true (for if they are not true, any statement can mean anything), then these laws are "a permanent historical matrix to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality", etc.⁴⁹ Therefore, this *minimal Objectivism* is true.

Further, the very idea that it is possible for individuals with different conceptual frameworks to discuss and attempt to rationally persuade presupposes the existence of objective standards. Let us suppose there are two groups, *X* and *Y*, with different conceptual frameworks. *A* is a member of *X* and *B* is a member of *Y*. If *A* and *B* are attempting to rationally persuade each other, then there must be some agreed on standard of rationality. Suppose *X* has some standard of rationality *P* and *Y* has some standard of rationality *Q*. Then *A* will try to convince *B* by appealing to *P* and *B* will try to convince *A* by appealing to *Q*. But since *A* doesn't accept *Q*, and *B* doesn't accept *P*, rationally speaking, the appeal will be in vain. Only if there is some standard of rationality common to both groups can there be rational persuasion. Suppose there is some standard of rationality common to both groups, namely *R*. Then *A* can try to convince *B* the conceptual framework of *X* is more coherent with *R* than the conceptual framework of *Y*, and vice versa. In this case there can be rational persuasion.

Moreover, this analysis can be applied to any two or more groups. So, if there is the possibility of rational persuasion between any two groups, then there must be some shared standards of rationality common to all of them. If a group did not share some standard of rationality with any other groups, then it could not join in the attempt at rational persuasion. Indeed, if there is any communication at all between members of different groups there must be shared standards of rationality, for if there were not they would not be able to understand each other. Communication by its very nature entails the existence of shared rationality. It can be shown there is necessarily only one conceptual framework that is a correct and exhaustive description of reality. The laws of identity and contradiction apply to everything that exists or could exist. There cannot be anything with contradictory properties, for then it would lack identity. For to have an identity is to be some thing. So there can only be one reality, although there can be an infinite number of descriptions of it.

Another point to examine is that strong Relativism seems to presuppose the falsity of theism. The concept of God, as we have seen entails that he is necessary and universal (causally active everywhere). Any being which was not necessary and universal would by definition not be God. The same goes for the concepts of omniscience and rationality. Consequently, one can say that by definition God would know the conceptual framework which correctly and exhaustively describes reality, and therefore knows the correct standards of rationality. Therefore, one has

the proposition, 'If God exists as classically defined, then there are universal permanent standards of rationality, and God knows them'. However, the thesis Bernstein and strong Relativists in general propound, is there are no universal permanent standards of rationality, for to say there are makes one an Objectivist. Hence, by *Modus Tollens* it follows that God does not exist. In short, the truth of the Relativist thesis presupposes the non-existence of God.

One basic problem with strong Relativism is it entails that there are a number of competing conceptual frameworks with no overall standard of rationality. Every group and individual has the framework they do largely because of the particular historical development they have undergone. There being no permanent ahistorical matrix, this conclusion necessarily follows. Bernstein and others such as Richard Rorty⁵⁰ believe members of different groups with differing conceptual frameworks must be able to discuss and 'rationally persuade' one another. If this is true, then it is itself the product of a historical process; the product of certain non-rational environmental factors. Due to this, it does not seem possible for this conceptual framework to be the true permanent ahistorical one as it is the product of historical development and there is no permanent ahistorical framework on it. Hence, Bernstein's belief that different groups may talk and attempt to persuade one another is only true with regards to himself and his group, it is not true for others. The basic problem for the defenders of a Bernstein type thesis is that there is not supposed to be any rationality over and above all different groups. Yet at the same time the method of 'rational persuasion' is there for all groups. If there is no inter-group rationality, then there is no reason for 'persuasion' to be applicable to all groups. Strong Relativism kills *any* attempt at universal rationality.

Conceptual frameworks or noetic structures are like maps, and an indefinite number of maps exist to depict one terrain. Of course, maps can contradict each other. Each noetic structure has its own map, and the standards of rationality for each one, on an Objectivist basis, are how well the different portions of the map and the symbols that describe the terrain cohere together. However the real, permanent, ahistorical, universal standard of rationality would be how accurately the map describes the terrain. In this analogy Strong Relativism accepts the possibility of the terrain but does not believe any map can actually describe it. In this case it makes no sense to say one map is better than another. The attempt to go beyond Objectivism and Relativism is similar to stating there is no actual terrain or admitting that there is, but believing it is forever unknowable. Further, it believes people with different maps can compare them and be persuaded that some other map is better than the one they have.

Only upon the presupposition of a rational universe does rational discourse make sense. Hence, there has to be an objective noetic structure which accurately and exhaustively describes reality, and within this there have to be standards of rationality, otherwise the framework could not be coherent. Relativity also exists, but this applies to the different noetic structures of different people. As people are finite and shaped by non-rational historical factors, it is inevitable that their viewpoints will be relative to a certain extent. People cannot, unlike God, grasp the

whole at once.

Not all relativism can be disposed of like strong relativism can. One philosopher who defines and defends another version of Relativism is Joseph Margolis.⁵¹ At the beginning of his book, Margolis states there are at least two versions of Relativism. He writes:

Once we view matters this way, it is extraordinarily convenient to distinguish between two sorts of alethic readings of relativism: in one truth-values or truth-like values are themselves relativized or, better, *relationalized*, so that (for instance) 'true' is systematically replaced by 'true in *Lk*' (for some particular language, perspective, habit of mind, social practice, convention or the like, selected from among a set of relevant alternatives [*k*'] that might well yield otherwise inconsistent, incompatible, contradictory values when judged in accord with the usual canonical bivalent values ('true' and 'false'), themselves taken to range over all such *k*'s. In the other, 'true' is *not* thus relationalized at all, but, rather, the bivalent values are systematically *replaced* in a formal way by a logically weaker set of many-valued truth-values or truth-like values; so that, where, on the bivalent model, logical inconsistency or contradiction obtains, now, on the replacement model and in accord with appropriate relevance constraints, such *logical incongruences* (as we may call them) need no longer be treated as full *logical inconsistencies, incompatibilities, contradictions*, or the like.⁵²

Margolis agrees that what I have called strong Relativism, or what he calls relationalism, is incoherent. However, he defends what I have called weak Relativism, or what he calls robust Relativism. Robust Relativism is a rejection of bivalence, or the claim that all propositions are true or false.⁵³ It also rejects the tertium non datur, or, as Margolis writes in quoting Michael Dummett, "[t]he principle that, for no statement, can we ever rule out the possibility of its being true and that of its being false, in other words, the principle that there can be no circumstances in which a statement can be recognized as being, irrevocably, neither true nor false."⁵⁴ These two conditions however, do not provide for robust Relativism as this emerges "only with the supposed *coherence of incongruent claims*."⁵⁵ That is, "[B]y incongruent claims, we mean truth- or truth-like claims that, on the bivalent model but not now, would be inconsistent, incompatible, or contradictory: on the argument, incongruent claims never devolve into such logically defective claims, because the usual bivalent values are, now, *systematically replaced*, . . ."⁵⁶ And what they are replaced by is truth or truth-like claims which are relationalized only to various positions.

It should be noted that the stance I have defended does not entail or depend upon the merits or demerits of Margolis' robust Relativism. My contention is that some beliefs, based on different perspectives, will seem more or less probable than other beliefs. I do not deny that in the final analysis one perspective is the correct one, nor that it is possible to discover the truth and learn which perspective is the correct one. That some things are relative is undeniable. However, not everything is, or can be.⁵⁷ Indeed, in theism there is ultimately only one coherent perspective: God's.

There is another definition, offered by Philip Devine, to be considered. He contends that relativists believe there are different conceptual frameworks, and that all must operate from one of these frameworks. More importantly, he finds that one cannot judge between these frameworks without accepting one of them, and thus begging the question.⁵⁸ Therefore, one can never know which of the frameworks is correct. However, this is *not* to say none of them are truly correct, but rather, that one could never know which one, because humans are all finite, conditioned creatures.

Again, the position I have defended does not entail this definition of relativism. On the contrary, I deny this definition. I believe there is only one framework which is ultimately correct and it is possible to discover which one it is.

Further, there is such a thing as objective relativity, even relations that are relative have an objective side to them. That is, given some noetic structure *N*, some proposition will look more or less probable, than in some other noetic structure *O*. As we have seen, from a theistic world-view miracles will seem probable, while from an atheistic world-view they will seem impossible or improbable. The crucial point is a theist can see that for an atheist miracles are improbable or impossible, while the atheist can see that for a theist miracles are probable or even necessary. That is, the probability structures are entailed by the larger noetic structures. Thus, there is objectivity. Relativity come into play when one is comparing the different structures. A tower may look square from one perspective, but round from another. The knowledge of all the laws of physics and optics would enable one to know that from position *P* the tower will look square and from position *Q* it will look round. Therefore, this is relativity, but not subjectivism; in short, an objective relativity.

It should be noted that there is a great deal more to the Relativism-Objectivism debate than I have been able to discuss here. The major point made by Hans-Georg Gadamer⁵⁹ and others, is that Objectivism is impossible as all knowledge is historically, ideologically, and otherwise contextually mediated. The best that can be hoped for is an attempt to have a 'fusion of horizons', wherein one attempts to understand the other person's point of view while simultaneously holding to their own; basically fusing the two viewpoints into one. Space constraints do not permit the analysis of all of this, however it can be said that *if* such a position denies objective truth altogether it is contradictory.

In conclusion, it cannot be said that it is universally and necessarily antecedently improbable for miracles in specific or theism in general to be true. They are from some perspectives, but not others. The rationale for examining theistic and atheistic viewpoints via the probability of miracles is twofold. First, the probability of miracles is an important issue in and of itself and second, the attack on miracles has been strongest by asserting the a priori improbability of the theistic viewpoint. This same general argument has been used against other theistic arguments, and indeed against theism per se. That is, many philosophers start with the implicit assumption (sometimes explicit) that theism is leprechaun level or less in antecedent plausibility. I have argued that in actuality this represents how implausible theism looks to them, that is, how it looks from the basis of their own world-view. For

these philosophers theism is so antecedently implausible that vast amounts of evidence would be needed to convince them of its truth.

No univocal standard of probability or plausibility exists in these matters. Thus, when one states theism has very low antecedent improbability, the appropriate response should be, *by what standard* of probability? If by the standards of atheism, then the judgment is question begging, if by some 'objective' standard, the burden of proof is on the asserter to show how this is possible.

This does not end this argument, of course, or that of rational persuasion. Different hypotheses and world-views make different predictions and these predictions can be tested. In addition, some hypotheses may be internally incoherent, and thus necessarily false. Therefore, providing arguments for the existence of God is not necessarily a futile enterprise. For example, if the extreme improbability that the laws of the universe came to be as they are by chance (the Anthropic Design argument) could be proven, then this would be evidence for a designer. The problem lies in that even if this premise could be proven, any particular person may find the existence of God even less probable. Thus, these kinds of argument, although worthwhile, may never function as complete proofs, for it is always possible (however far-fetched) to deny one of the premises.

In final summary two things must be said. First, one cannot correctly speak of the 'antecedent improbability' of miracles. The probability of miracles varies widely from specific miracle to specific miracle, and from world-view to world-view. When the actuality of any specific miracle is being investigated and when people with rival noetic and probability structures are involved, the judgments about the antecedent probability of that miracle will be different. In debating between two or more rival views, the truth of one probability structure should not be assumed nor should the a priori antecedent probability of the specific alleged miracle. The alleged miracle should be looked at as an 'ordinary' event; accepted as being philosophically unproblematic to both world-views. The historical evidence can then be judged to determine if it supports the historicity of the miracle and the truth of the different noetic and probability structures.

Second, with regard to world-views: (A) all persons necessarily have a noetic and probability structure, (B) none of these structures is 'neutral', and (C) to assume a priori the truth and/or probability structure of one world-view and deem it binding on the participants in a debate over which noetic structures is true, is question begging. The atheist begs the question if he states the probability structure of atheism must be assumed in judging the evidence in a debate between atheism and theism. In addition, the concept that the burden of proof is somehow on the theist is also question begging. At this level, either none bears the burden of proof, or both do.

Thus, to prove the existence of God, the evidence would have to be based on premises which could not possibly be denied. The only premises that could not be denied would be those which lie at the basis of all rational thought. This means the proof would have to be *transcendental*, that is, it would show God lies at the base of all possible thought and proof. For proof to exist, the existence of God would

have to be shown to have the same epistemic status as the **basic** laws of logic. It is to this that I now move.

CHAPTER 7

THE ULTIMATE POSSIBILITIES

The preceding chapters have established the foundation for the main argument of this book. Thus far the acceptance of arguments has been shown to depend upon the beliefs of the person one is trying to persuade, as well as on the soundness of the argument itself. In addition, premises that seem quite plausible in one noetic structure or world-view may seem obviously false in another. The root of the conflict of these visions (to use Sowell's term) can be determined by examining the ultimate, exclusive and exhaustive visions themselves. As already argued, the basic laws of logic such as identity and contradiction, as well as the basic forms of validity such as *Modus Tollens*, are necessary for any world-view. Any world-view, presuppositions or visions that claim to be true descriptions of reality must, at a minimum, be logical.

Ultimately there are three different world-views. The three world-views are: the Brute Fact theory, the Necessary Universe theory, and the Necessary Deity theory. In the Brute Fact theory, reality is held to be ultimately determined by chance. In the Necessary Universe theory, the universe itself is necessary; it exists for reasons intrinsic to itself. In the Necessary Deity theory, God exists as an necessary being with the universe being his contingent creation. All world-views are one version of these three theories or some attempt at a combination of the three. They are not synonymous with naturalism, pantheism, and theism, respectively. For example, it is possible to be a theist and yet a believer in the Brute Fact theory. All one has to do is believe that God exists but is not logically necessary.

The objection that the whole question is improper in some respect must be considered before moving on. Michael Scriven writes:

Does this [the rejection of theism] mean that the Universe exists by accident, by chance? Not at all: that is a false dilemma. We have argued that the Universe cannot be part of a plan, but it does not follow that its existence is a chance affair. For processes *within* the Universe, these might be said to be the only alternatives, but the Universe is not a process within the Universe. It is not the kind of entity which is created or appears, and hence the possible ways in which this might happen are not

covered by the alternatives of 'deliberately planned' and 'accidentally occurring'. Neither alternative can be given any meaning for the Universe as a whole. . . . We know that either the sum of all the explanations or the final theory cannot itself require explanation.¹

Scriven argues that ultimate things, like the laws which govern the universe or the universe itself, cannot of necessity have an explanation for being the way they are, and thus the question as to why the universe exists is illegitimate. However, this is false as one can conceive of the ultimate entity, whatever it is, as either existing for reasons intrinsic to itself or existing for no reason at all. For the ultimate being one of these two options has to be true, and if there are options, then the question as to why the ultimate being exists is legitimate. Another valid question is whether the universe, which I have said is the material universe, is the ultimate being or not. If one calls reality 'the Universe', then of course one cannot posit another being which is the explanation for it. However, one can still ask the question as to why it exists, rather than nothing or some other 'universe'.

There are different variations of the three different world-views, the first of which is the theistic Brute Fact and atheistic Brute Fact, which have already been mentioned. Other examples may include different concepts of the Necessary Deity, though I have argued and will argue further below that there is only one which is coherent. The position which has the greatest variation however, is that of the Necessary Universe. There are naturalistic and pantheistic theories of the Necessary Universe. The pantheistic theories consist of those which state the universe is itself the ultimate being, others that state the universe is a necessary emanation of the ultimate being, and still others wherein the necessary beings that cause the existence of the universe are abstract entities.

This claim is indeed a matter of logic, dependent upon the nature of reality. There are several different ways in which the term universe can be defined. One has already been given in chapter one. A more rigorous definition is given by Quentin Smith, who writes that the universe is "[T]he four-dimensional space-time continuum and any n-dimensional physical state that is earlier or later than the four-dimensional continuum."² Other definitions are possible, however the basic intuitive point is that the universe is the space time continuum and contains all the matter which exists and interacts in it. Now, either the universe, the space-time continuum and everything in it, *has a reason for its existence external to itself*, or it doesn't. If it doesn't, then it either exists for a reason internal to itself or it exists for no reason at all. The three ultimate possibilities are:

(7.1) Brute Fact: The universe exists for no reason at all.

(7.2) Necessary Universe: The universe exists for reasons internal to itself.

(7.3) Necessary Deity: The universe exists for reasons external to itself, that is, it is dependent upon some other being(s).

(7.3) is not as clear cut as it may seem. There is a difference between ultimate reasons and immediate reasons. If the universe's existence is dependent ultimately upon some other necessary being, then this is the Necessary Deity theory. However, if its existence is only dependent immediately upon some other being, but ultimately for no reason at all, this is the Brute Fact theory. The term ultimate is used to mean something for which no further reason can be given. This ultimate reason would have to be internal to the thing which causes the universe to exist. Immediate causation is different in that, for example, if some God causes the universe to exist, but itself existed for no reason then there would be no reason why the whole universe existed. This would result in

(7.4) Necessary Deity: The universe exists for ultimate reasons external to itself, that is, it is ultimately dependent upon some other being, that is itself necessary.

Let us examine in detail the option that the universe is dependent upon some other thing or things for its existence. The thing(s) upon which the universe is dependent must be either necessary or contingent. If the universe is dependent for its existence upon some other being or beings, then the universe is contingent in some sense of the word. This is true even if in every possible world the universe is brought into existence, for as was already shown, contingent has at least two different meanings. Again let us call the concept of contingency wherein a being is dependent for its existence upon some other being contingentD, and the concept of contingency wherein a being does not exist in all possible worlds contingentP. Even if the universe is not contingentP it still may be contingentD. However, if the universe is contingent, then one must question whether the being or beings that the universe is dependent upon for its existence is contingentD or necessary. If contingentD, then that being or beings is dependent upon some other being or beings and gives rise to a chain of dependency. This scenario can have three different conclusions.

(7.5) The chain terminates in a contingentP being.

(7.6) The chain is composed of an infinite number of links of beings, each contingentD.

(7.7) The chain terminates in a necessary being.

In (7.5) the chain terminates in a being who does not exist in all possible worlds, but is not dependent upon anything else for its existence; thus the chain is composed entirely of contingentP beings. Suppose the universe were caused to exist by God A, and God A is caused to exist by God B, and God B is caused to exist by God C, and so on, until one comes to God XXZ, who, although contingentP, is uncaused. In this scenario all of the beings would be contingent P beings. Further, as all of the members of the set depend for their existence upon God XXZ who exists for no reason, then ultimately, the set itself exists for no reason. The reasoning for this,

is if *XXZ* is contingentP, then it cannot have the reason for its existence internal to itself. Beings which have the reason for their existence internal to themselves are *necessary* beings. By stipulation, *XXZ* is not a necessary being, so by Modus Tollens, it cannot have the reason for its existence internal to itself. Also by stipulation, *XXZ* does not have a reason for its existence in some other being. Therefore, *XXZ*'s existence is a *brute fact*, and as *XXZ* is the cause of everything else, the existence of everything else and of the set as a whole, is a brute fact.

The same basic reasoning applies to (7.6). Here, every member of the chain is contingentD and contingentP. Thus, by the reasoning given above, the existence of the chain itself and every member in it must be a brute fact. The chain does not exist for reasons intrinsic to itself, and there is no being outside the chain to actualize it. Ultimately it exists for no reason at all, even though every member in the chain has an immediate cause for its existence. As the chain itself might not have existed, (7.6) like (7.5), is really an instance of Brute Fact theory. This conclusion could be challenged through the fallacy of composition theory which states something cannot be necessary if every part which composes it is contingent. This challenge has already been shown to be false in chapter five.

(7.7), in contradistinction to (7.5) and (7.6), does not give the Brute Fact theory, but rather the Necessary Deity theory. Again, this theory is that the universe is dependent upon some necessary being for its existence. The necessary being shall be called Deity, or God, for any being great enough to cause the existence of the universe, and exists out of its own inner necessity, is great enough to be called a God. Indeed, if the arguments in chapter four are correct, then any being who exists out of its own necessity must be identical with the God of classical theism, and therefore not only be a God, but *the God*. Thus, if the universe is contingentD or contingentP then either the Brute Fact or Necessary Deity theory is true. For the universe to be necessary if cannot be contingentP, and if the universe is necessary, then it exists in all possible worlds. There are two reasons why something can exist in all possible worlds. One is that it has the reason for its existence within itself, and the other is that it is necessarily caused by another necessary being. Hence, if the universe does not exist in all possible worlds, then it ultimately exists for no reason at all or it is caused to exist by a Necessary Deity.

To summarize, the concept that the universe is dependent for existence upon something extrinsic to itself leads to the Brute Fact theory or the Necessary Deity theory. However, in the case of a Necessary Deity who necessarily chooses to create this particular universe, it could be argued that the universe would then fall under the Necessary Universe theory. In this situation, the universe would have a De Dicto necessity, because it would be dependent upon some external state of affairs. However, I believe it would be best to put this scenario under the Necessary Deity theory, for even though the universe would necessarily exist, the reason that it did so would be internal to another being. Thus, the most fundamental being would be the Necessary Deity from whom the universe necessarily *emanates*. In short, the universe would only be secondarily necessary, while the Deity would have primary necessity.

The other two theories are Brute Fact and Necessary Universe. Either the universe exists for no reason at all (Brute Fact), or it exists for reasons that lie entirely within itself (Necessary Universe). The reason for the existence of the universe is ultimately based in one of these three different possibilities. Logically there can be no more, however conceivably there can be *combinations* of two or three of these.

(7.8) A combination of Brute Fact and Necessary Universe; that is, some things could exist for no reason at all, but some, say part of the universe, could exist for reasons internal to itself.

(7.9) A combination of Brute Fact and Necessary Deity; that is, some things could exist for no reason at all, but there could also be a Necessary Deity in existence. Some things would exist for no reason at all, but others would be caused by the Necessary Deity.

(7.10) A combination of Necessary Universe and Necessary Deity, where the Universe exists of its own necessity and there is also a necessary Deity.

(7.11) A combination of all three, where some things exist for no reason at all, some things in the universe exist out of their own inner necessity, and a Deity also exists out of his own inner necessity.

These are not real possibilities. In chapter four it was argued that the only coherent concept of a necessary being is that of the GPB; of the sovereign God. If this is correct, then the above are impossible, for if a sovereign God exists he will necessarily be in control of all things; nothing will exist without his willing it to exist. To eliminate any doubt in the truth of this argument I will examine the combinations in detail.

The combination of a brute fact and a broadly logically necessary universe is impossible. If this were possible, some things would have to exist in the manner that they do and other things would not have to exist at all. If any interaction between the two is possible, then it would seem the brute fact objects could affect the logically necessary objects. If this were true, then the logically necessary objects would not exist in the manner they would have to out of necessity. The statement, objects which exist in the manner they do out of broadly logical necessity can in fact exist in some other manner, is inconsistent. Therefore, either a universe in which objects exist out of logical necessity cannot exist, or objects which exist as a brute fact cannot exist, or a situation in which brute fact objects affect objects which exist out of logical necessity cannot exist. As this last condition is implausible, there can be no universe wherein such a combination exists.

If the arguments in chapter four are true and the only coherent concept of a necessary being is that of the GPB, then why devote an entire chapter to examining the concept of a Necessary Universe? The arguments in chapter four were devoted

to the concept of a necessary *being*, rather than the concept of a whole universe of necessary beings. What applies to the first concept may not apply to the second. The arguments presented in chapter four assumed it was at least possible that some other, more powerful being could exist to create or destroy the first. However, if some version of the Necessary Universe theory is correct, then there couldn't be more powerful beings than those which existed. Therefore, the argument rests upon a supposition the Necessary Universe theorist regards as being impossible. To go around this objection, the Necessary Universe theory must be regarded in and of itself. Finally, as the Necessary Universe is one of the three major possibilities for the existence of the universe, it should be examined in detail.

I now come to the argument whose explication will be the major theme in the rest of the book. The development of this argument will rely on the laws of logic and the existence of an ordered universe. If the laws of logic are not valid, (and the very notion of validity presupposes the laws of logic), then no knowledge is possible. If there is no ordered universe, then no books can be written for people to read and consider the possibility of concepts. My argument is intended to go even deeper, and shall explicate and defend not one, but two different arguments. The first is apagogic and abductive and is primarily concerned with the existence of the ordered universe while the second is transcendental and is concerned with the very possibility of any knowledge at all. Both of the arguments will depend upon the same data. While the first argument seeks to establish the truth about the accounting for the universe as it is, the second would be true no matter what the universe was actually like. The first argument depends upon the principle that if there are, for example, three possible theories to give an account of something, *A*, *B*, and *C*, and for some reason *A* and *B* are impossible, then *C* must be true. While this argument is abductive, it is also deductive, for it depends upon the law of the deductive syllogism. Formally put, the argument looks like this:

(7.12) There are five different accounts which can be given for the existence of the universe as it is. They are:

- (a) brute fact: the universe exists for no reason at all.
- (b) contingent God: the universe exists by reason of the activity of a contingent God.
- (c) necessary universe: the universe exists out of its own inner necessity.
- (d) necessary God: the universe exists by reason of the activity of a logically necessary God.
- (e) some combination of the above.

(7.13) Not (a). It is extremely improbable that the universe would continue for so long to behave in an orderly fashion as has actually happened (much less probable as 1 trillion fair die being rolled 1 trillion times and always coming up sixes) without there

(7.14) Not (b). For this ultimately reduces to (a) and has the same problems.

(7.15) Not (c). There are too many reasons against this, for the universe and the laws that it follows seem to be contingent, and it seems impossible that any sort of abstract necessity could account for the universe as it is.

(7.16) Not (e). For a combination of (a) and (b) reduces to (a), while a combination of either (a) and (c) or (b) and (c) seems incoherent, or at least gives a situation where the problems of both scenarios are there.

(7.17) Therefore, (d). This is the sole option which can explain the fact of the universe existing in the manner that it does.

(7.18) But the sole coherent concept of a necessarily existing Deity is that of the GPB, the greatest possible being, who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent and sovereign.

(7.19) Therefore, an omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent and sovereign being exists.

It should be noted that (7.13) is not stating that anything which is improbable and yet happens needs a cause for its happening. For example, it is very improbable that 1 trillion dice rolled 1 trillion times would always come up sixes by chance, yet it could happen. The statement being made is that if something very improbable happens, it probably had a cause rather than happened by chance. The only exception to this may be stated as follows, 'something which is very improbable yet happens, probably has a cause of its happening in the manner that it does, unless the situation is such that, necessarily, something improbable will happen'. As an example, if the movement of an electron is really indeterminate, and there are 1 billion places on a wall it could hit with equal probability, then the chance that it will hit any particular spot is very small, yet necessarily, because of the context, it need hit one of them. Thus, in this case there is necessity for something very improbable to happen.

Consider a situation in which a fair die has not 6, but 1 trillion faces, one of which is colored red while all the others are colored green. If one rolls this die, then, necessarily, one of the faces will come up. As it is a fair die, each of the faces will have an equal, or one trillionth chance of coming up. Of course, something which has only one trillionth of a chance of happening is very improbable. But given the situation, necessarily, one of the faces *had* to come up. So, necessarily, something very improbable will happen. Thus, even though the face that actually came up had only a very small chance of doing so, it is not *surprising*³ that it did, because given the situation something very improbable had to happen. A similar situation arises in a stadium with 100,000 seats which are all filled. Antecedently, it is quite improbable that on any given occasion each seat has the particular person sitting in it that it does. However, given a situation where all the seats are sold and the

it that it does. However, given a situation where all the seats are sold and the people showed up, necessarily some situation which is antecedently improbable had to happen. Chance, the absence of a reason, can account for an improbable situation happening.

On the other hand, if the red face came up on the die it would not only be very improbable, it would also be very surprising as there was only one trillionth of a chance that a red rather than a green face would turn up. For the face which was colored red to turn up, considered only as one face among a trillion, is improbable but not surprising because, given the context, necessarily something very improbable had to happen. Given this particular situation, one face had to come up. So here there is a reason why something very improbable happened, as chance, the absence of a reason or cause, can account for the one face coming up. However for the red face to turn up, considered as one red face against 999,999,999,999 green faces, is very improbable as there is no reason at this level for something very improbable to happen. Vastly more improbable would be a situation where after several rolls the red face kept turning up. In short it is very improbable, given this situation, for a red face to come up rather than a green face, and there is no reason why this improbable thing should happen. The first kind of improbability, where given the situation something improbable will happen, will be called a 'first order improbability'. The second, where given the situation there is no necessity or reason why something improbable should happen, will be called a 'second order improbability'.

There are two different aspects to be considered when speaking about the order of the universe. First is the orderliness of the behavior of the objects in the universe, and second is the orderliness of the existence of the objects in the universe. The first aspect must account for the fact that the objects in the universe act according to the various natural laws, seemingly without exception; or at most with only a few exceptions and is therefore considered the teleological aspect of the universe. The second aspect must account for why the objects in the universe remain in existence over time, rather than 'popping' in and out of existence and is considered the cosmological aspect of the universe.

Is the argument which has been given above ((7.12) - (7.19)), just a restatement of the teleological and cosmological arguments? There is no definite answer to this question. Traditionally, the teleological argument started with the premise that orderliness or (apparent) design required an orderer or designer, while the cosmological argument was based on everything finite or contingent needing a cause for its existence; everything needs a reason for it to exist. The argument I have given above does not contain either of these premises. However, as it parallels the teleological and cosmological arguments in the fact that it argues from the same features of the universe (orderliness and existence over time), they may possibly be called the abductive teleological argument and the abductive cosmological argument.

The above argument is just the first step in a longer, more complex argument. Therefore, I will explicate the rest of my argument which I have named

(7.20) If the universe is a product of brute fact, then it is intrinsically unknowable. No predication can be successfully made of things that exist for no reason; nor can a mind that exists for no reason understand anything.

(7.21) If the universe is a product of its own inner necessity, then it is intrinsically unknowable. The only kind of necessity that is relevant here is an abstract necessity, and from abstract necessity one cannot know of the existence and nature of any finite being.

(7.22) Any attempt to combine the Brute Fact and Necessary Universe theories will only end up giving one the problems of both.

(7.23) Therefore, the existence of the necessary deity, the GPB, is necessary for anyone to understand anything.

(7.24) Therefore, the existence of the GPB must be *presupposed* to have any knowledge whatsoever. Thus the existence of God is transcendental; that is, a necessary presupposition of all thought and proof.

The term transcendental when used here is akin to Kant's use of it. For thought to be justifiable, God must be presupposed; his existence and nature are therefore an a priori concept that undergirds all understanding. Knowledge must therefore be understood in the light of the concept of God.

The basic laws of logic, such as the laws of identity and contradiction, must be presupposed for any thought to be valid. If they are not valid, then no thought can be intelligible. If there could be real contradictions, for example, then the proposition 'Clinton is president' could just as well mean 'My dog is furry', or 'All snow is green', or anything else. And if anything can mean anything, then no thought has any validity. Even irrationalists must use logic to express their irrationality. How then can the laws of logic be established? To directly argue for them would be circular, for one would be using the laws of logic to establish the laws of logic. Instead, to think intelligibly one must presuppose that these laws are valid.⁴ There can be no stronger proof than this.

My argument is transcendental because it will attempt to show that the existence of the God of classical theism is a necessary presupposition of all thought, and is therefore a concept which enters, at least implicitly, in all thought. My argument is also abductive, for it depends upon showing that all non-theistic alternatives fail because *they cannot give an account of the universe as it is*. Of course, this also entails the incoherency of the non-theistic alternatives for they claim that certain propositions are true (e.g., all is physical), while at the same time depending upon the truth of other propositions (God exists) which are contradictory to the ones that they develop.

In summation, there are only three positions as to why the universe exists in the manner it does: it exists for no reason at all, it exists for a reason intrinsic to itself, and it exists because of the activity of a being which exists for a reason intrinsic to

itself. There are no other possibilities. The first two possibilities will be shown in the next two chapters to be impossible for two fundamental reasons. First, neither can successfully account for the universe as it is, and second neither can provide a justification for any thought or proof at all. Only the third option can do so. It is to these matters that the discussion will now turn.

CHAPTER 8

BRUTE FACT

Brute Fact is a rather poetic name for the view there is no necessary concrete being; it holds that all beings are logically contingent. As Bertrand Russell said in his famous debate with Frederick Copleston, in Brute Fact theory "The universe is just there, and that's all."¹ In this view, the universe exists by chance. There are an infinite number of possible worlds and the fact this world exists rather than some other possible world has no reason; it is just a brute fact.

Of course laws exist at the secondary causation level which describe the way things act. But although it is possible to describe the behavior of objects in terms of laws, at a deeper level the behavior of the objects is governed by chance, which is to say it is ungoverned. This is because in Brute Fact theory the reason these particular laws pertain rather than some other set of laws, or no laws at all, is itself a matter of chance. In Brute Fact theory there is no 'deeper' or 'higher' being which exists in all worlds who can determine what else will exist in the rest of the universe. There is nothing more fundamental than the possible worlds themselves.

The theistic version of the Brute Fact theory is a partial exception to this. Here, there is a being, God, who creates and therefore determines what the rest of the universe will be like. This God exists by chance, creates all the other concrete objects and determines the laws which govern them. However, even in this view the ultimate reason why anything exists in the manner it does is still chance. The fact this God exists rather than some other God, or none at all, is a matter of chance. As the being's existence is uncaused and not necessary, there is no reason why he exists. This is true if one is speaking in the traditional sense of God as a personal being, or in the more extended sense, as some sort of ultimate upon which everything else depends.

Most contemporary philosophers who are atheists or agnostics believe in some form of the Brute Fact theory. In addition, many theistic philosophers are also Brute Fact theorists. There are two basic reasons for the popularity of Brute Fact. First, as was shown in chapters two and three, the concept of a necessary being has been, and is, problematic or impossible for many philosophers. If one believes God

can't be logically necessary in the broad sense, then it certainly seems implausible for the average table or kangaroo to be logically necessary in the same sense. Second, it seems obvious that the universe is contingent, it could have been different, therefore any table or kangaroo might not have existed, or existed differently than it does. The fact the universe could have been different shows it is not necessary. As Mortimer Adler writes:

How do we know that the present cosmos is only a possible universe (one of many possibilities that might exist), not a necessary universe (the only one that can ever exist)? We can infer it from the fact that the arrangement and disarray-the order and disorder-of the present cosmos might have been otherwise, might have been different from what it is. There is no compelling reason to think that the natural laws which govern the present cosmos are the only possible natural laws.²

This sentiment, which is echoed in the writings of many other thinkers³, is probably the most fundamental reason for the widespread belief that the universe is ultimately a brute fact.

Thus far we have been speaking of concrete entities. When dealing with abstract entities from a realist approach a fundamentally different situation emerges. If abstract entities do exist, they are not logically contingent and thus possess a broadly logical necessity. If the realist approach to abstract entities is correct, then based on the Brute Fact theory there would be abstract entities which are logically necessary, and concrete entities which would exist ultimately for no reason at all.

The three areas which must be considered when questioning why the universe exists in the manner it does are order, being and knowledge. Order deals with the lawfulness of the behavior of the objects in the universe while being considers the stability of the existence of things in the universe. Knowledge is where the argument becomes transcendental and deals with the knowability of the universe, or why knowledge of the universe and the things in it, or even knowledge at all, is possible.

The fact that the same laws for the universe hold over all of space and time and have done so for the entire history of the universe is very significant. There are not laws which pertain to a particular region of space and different laws which pertain to the star Sirius or the Andromeda galaxy. The speed of light, 300,000 kilometers per second, was not 500,000 kilometers per second one million or even one billion years ago. As far as can be discerned, the laws of the universe are invariant. Physicist Paul Davies, on a closely related issue, states:

Quite apart from the accuracy of this overall matching, there is the mystery of why the universe is so extraordinarily uniform, both in the distribution of matter, and the rate of expansion. Most explosions are chaotic affairs, and one might expect the big bang to have varied in its degree of vigor from place to place. This was not so. The expansion of the universe in our own cosmic neighborhood is indistinguishable in rate from that on the far side of the universe.⁴

Uniformity and lawful behavior exist throughout the entire universe. The only exception to this seems to be at the sub-atomic level, where most physicists think there is genuine indeterminacy. Regarding natural laws F.R. Tennant writes, "laws of nature are not prescriptions to things, but descriptions of how things have behaved and may be expected to behave."⁵ In other words, the laws of nature are descriptive in the sense they describe how things behave. They are not prescriptive in the sense of determining how things must behave. There is regularity, but this regularity is, at the level of the laws, unexplained and is called the 'Regularity Theory'. This theory holds the laws of nature are regularities in the way they act. Although it does not have as much support as it formerly did, "It is still orthodoxy among analytic philosophers."⁶ There are different version of the Regularity Theory, but the simplest version, what D.M. Armstrong called the Naive Regularity Theory has been summarized by George Molnar thusly:

p is a statement of a law of nature if and only if:

(8.1) *p* is universally quantified

(8.2) *p* is [omnitemporally and omnispatially] true

(8.3) *p* is contingent

(8.4) *p* contains only non-local empirical predicates, **apart from logical connectives and quantifiers**⁷

In short, for some statement *p* to be a law of nature, *p* must be universally quantified, that is, applicable everywhere, true, contingent, and have no predicates that are only local or non-universal. According to (8.3) a law of nature must be contingent, that is, it cannot have a broadly logical necessity. This fact puts the Regularity Theory in the Brute Fact camp. Armstrong subjects this version, along with other versions of the Regularity Theory to a detailed attack, which in my opinion is generally successful. However, the critical point to note is that in the Regularity Theory there is no explanation as to why the objects in the universe act in a nomic manner. They just do. The Regularity Theory gives an accounting for the regularity of the uniformity of the universe but not an explanation for it. The Regularity Theory is therefore an expression of the Brute Fact theory.

As most contemporary philosophers hold to some version of the Brute Fact theory, why not accept the reality that there is uniformity as a Brute Fact and leave it at that? Why should the criticism that the Brute Fact and Regularity theories don't explain the behavior and/or uniformity of the objects of the universe be a problem? Is it question begging to criticize the Brute Fact theory because it provides no explanation for the behavior of things in the universe when the theory itself maintains there can be no explanation for such matters?

However attractive the answers to these questions may be, they are all fatally flawed. For the odds against the universe being uniform in its nomic structure on

the basis of chance are infinitesimal. To demonstrate this, some basic facts must be shown. Subatomic particles such as protons, neutrons, electrons and others exist along with the fundamental forces in nature such as the strong and weak atomic forces, the electro-magnetic force and gravity. What happens in the universe is largely a result of the interplay of the above particles and forces and the laws that govern quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity.

Let us examine some typical event in space and time including a neutron N , involved in some particular event E , at some time T and a space S . Normally an event will happen according to the laws of physics, even if the event is probabilistic rather than deterministic. Take for example, the interaction of N with some other particle, N' . As the particles have specific properties, they will interact in a specific manner, depending upon things such as the strength of the strong nuclear force. So E , the interaction of N and N' , will take place in accordance with the laws governing the interaction of the various factors involved, such as distance, force strength, etc., to give the end result. This same scenario could be demonstrated for every event which takes place in space and time. The crucial point is just how complex every event really is. And this is just the subatomic level. At the macro level, e.g., the level of cars, stars and aardvarks, the events which happen are really combinations of innumerable smaller events.

Thus, for the universe to continue to operate in a lawful manner, a large number of forces and entities must act consistently over large areas of space and time. One of the factors involved in event E , the interaction of particles N and N' , was the strength of the strong nuclear force which both of the particles possessed. Suppose that at T , the time that E took place, the strength of the strong nuclear force of N was halved. The event would be different than the normal event which took place as the result of the interaction of the two particles N and N' . The result would still be different if the strong nuclear force were twice that of normal, or one tenth, or whatever.

In Brute Fact theory any particular particle which exists at space S and time T , exists in the manner it does by chance. The strong nuclear force of any particular subatomic particle N could have been other than it is; it is just a matter of chance that it exists as it is. Let us examine the matter of the strong nuclear force in more detail, remembering that it is only one of many such forces. At any particular time T , for some particular neutron N , the strength of the strong nuclear force could be normal, twice normal, half normal, ten times normal, etc. If the strength of the particle's strong nuclear force is what it is by chance, then there is only a very small, perhaps infinitesimal chance it will be the normal strength of the strong nuclear force for neutrons. Therefore, there is only a very small, call it $1/C$ chance that at T , N will have the normal strong nuclear force, which will be called F . Of course, it could be argued that if a particle is to have some force by chance, and have the forces strength by chance, then whatever strength it will have will be very improbable, but not surprising. This however, is not the point: the significant issue is the uniformity which exists throughout the universe.

It is not only at time T that N has F . At all times N exists as a neutron it has F ,

and so does every other neutron in the universe. But if at any time T the chance that N has F is $1/C$, then the chance that N will also have F at T' is $1/C^2$. At three times the chance that N will have F , all three is $1/C^3$. And so it goes, quickly multiplying into an extremely improbable and surprising state of affairs. Remember, this is just one neutron; there are countless trillions of neutrons in existence, existing over roughly fifteen billion years, according to contemporary astro-physics. To show the magnitude of the problem based upon very minimal suppositions, let us imagine a neutron's strong nuclear force can only have two possible states. (Actually many more states seem to be broadly logically possible, so the problem is being seriously understated here.) For any time T , a particular neutron N can have a strong nuclear force at either level F or F' . The neutron will have whatever level it has by chance at any particular time. For it to have F consistently over time by chance it would have at time T $1/2$ chance; at times T and T' $1/4$ chance, at times T , T' , and T'' the odds would be $1/8$. If one has ten times, then the odds of them all having F for all ten times is $1/1024$. Yet this is only one particle over a brief time of its existence, with only one of the forces it possesses. And there are other possibilities, e.g., having no strong nuclear force, or having other forces which the existing particles today do not have.

Brute Fact theorists may say the fact that the universe exists in the manner it does is by chance and the fact that the particles of the universe have the properties they do is by chance, but once they have the properties they do, they keep them. To put it another way, which possible world is the actual world is a matter of chance, but once a world is 'chosen', the laws it has, although they could have been different, remain constant throughout the history of the universe. Indeed, this is probably what most Brute Fact theorists would say.

However, this solution doesn't work. For what is given by 'chance' is not just one possible world, but every object and event in every possible world. The universe is composed of things like particles, events, times, spaces, forces and laws. Let us call the A particle participating in an event at some particular time and at some particular space, involved with certain forces and laws a *bundle*, which shall be designated B . (I am not making any deep metaphysical claims about the nature of physical reality by calling things like this a bundle.) Two different particles existing at the same time are two bundles and the same particle existing at two different times is also two bundles. Thus, the universe is composed of innumerable B 's. An example of this would be the involvement of innumerable B 's every time I raise my arm to drink some tea. Every macro event, like me drinking tea, is composed of smaller events, like each electron in my arm moving. Thus, every macro event requires the cooperation of countless B 's. But on Brute Fact theory every B is logically opaque to every other B . This means there is no broadly logical necessary connection: any relationship between any of them is a chance relationship. Any particular B , on Brute Fact theory, is independent of any and all other B . The fact they have any relation at all, such as having at some time T the same F , is strictly a matter of chance. B' could have had F , while B'' could have had F' , as far as logic goes. No logical laws are violated, only natural ones. But, if natural laws are only

contingent, then by definition they could have been different. They are, on Brute Fact theory, merely a brute fact. And being so, they could have been different at every different *B*.

Perhaps the following illustration will clarify this concept. A Brute Fact theorist may think of reality like a die (a *really* big die!) with an infinite number of faces. Each face represents one of the possible worlds which could end up being the actual world. The die is rolled, one of the faces comes up, and this is the actual world. Thus, the actual world is determined by chance, but once the world is actual, everything in it, including all of its laws, are established. However, in reality if every possible world is one face on the die, then every face on the die is itself made up of countless faces on smaller dice. Similarly, suppose the infinite number of faces on the die were colored, some one color and others multicolored, and all of the colors stood for laws. If one possible world in the universe were to have one consistent set of laws, then it would be of one color. But in order to achieve this uniformity of color one would have to 'roll' dice for all the *B*'s which exist in that world. Basically most possible worlds are composed of innumerable bundles of particles, times, spaces, and forces. For there to be uniformity in the possible world every *B* in it must come out the same, for no reason. To use the dice analogy, every face on the infinite die is composed of a number of smaller dice, every small die represents a bundle, and in order for the face on the infinite die to come up one color, the faces on all the smaller dice must come up that color.

Hence, if one wanted a face on the infinite die to be red, representing one consistent set of laws in the universe of that possible world, then every *B*, or every face on the smaller dice in that world must be 'rolled' to come up red. However, as already shown, the odds of a particular particle, which is an essential part of most bundles, having the same properties over time are very small. And when the proviso that every bundle in the universe must be identical to every other bundle is added, the odds quickly become insurmountable. For one of the faces on the infinite die to be wholly red, which represents a universe with consistent laws like the one we dwell in, an uncounted number of dice would have to be rolled over and over again, and they would all have to come up red. The odds of a trillion six sided fair dice being rolled a trillion times coming up six is extremely small and the odds of all the bundles in the universe coming out with the same laws for no reason is infinitesimally smaller than that.

Astronomer Hugh Ross states, "In 1937, British physicist Paul Dirac had noted that the number of baryons (basically protons plus neutrons) in the known universe (10^{80}) is almost exactly equal to the inverse square of the gravitational constant."⁸ The point being that 10^{80} particles (not counting the smaller particles like electrons, neutrinos and quarks) is a vastly larger number than one trillion, and 15 billion years requires vastly more 'rolls' than one trillion. Yet these baryons act in the same manner now as they did throughout the 15 billion year history of the universe. This is magnified by the fact that a regular die only has six faces, however a die representing a bundle would require a myriad of faces to represent all the different logically possible values of the different properties. Thus, the odds against getting

a face on the infinite die to be all red by chance is infinitesimal. Comparably, getting a universe with uniform nomological behavior by chance is also infinitesimal.

To summarize, based on the Brute Fact theory which believes everything ultimately happens for no reason, and because there seems to be no *logical* problem with particles like neutrons having different strengths or sizes of various forces and other properties, the odds of the universe being uniformly ordered is infinitesimal. It may be logically possible, but in actuality it is impossible. The flaw in this concept lies in the nature of the Brute Fact theory. The destructiveness works both ways. The most fundamental activity is the bundle, which is basically a subatomic object acting at a certain time and place in a certain manner. Logically, every bundle is independent of every other one. This means bundle *x* has no logically necessary connection with bundle *y*; what happens to *x* is independent of what happens to *y*. This does not mean there are no actual relations between them, but these relations are necessarily brute fact relations. They too could have been different, and indeed are the way they are for ultimately no reason at all. Thus, anything which is not entailed by the law of contradiction is a brute fact, and any order is purely coincidental. Based on this concept, whichever possible world exists by chance contains no factor which entails there will be uniformity at the bundle level. There are, on Brute Fact theory, possible worlds which contain orderly universes and possible worlds which contain chaotic universes, however the chaotic universes greatly outnumber the orderly ones.

Thus, the Brute Fact theory when taken to its logical conclusion, implies the universe should be chaotic. This conclusion is erroneous and therefore entails that the Brute Fact theory is false. This argument is not new, as a very young Bertrand Russell stated:

Let us suppose that the universe we now see has, as some suppose, grown by mere chance. Should we then expect to see every atom to act in any given condition precisely similarly to another atom? I think, if atoms be lifeless, there is no reason to expect them to do anything without a controlling power. If, on the other hand, they be endowed with free will, we are forced to the conclusion that all atoms in the universe have combined in the commonwealth and have made laws which none of them ever break. This is clearly an absurd hypothesis, and therefore we are forced to believe in God.⁹

Considering the activity of even one particle, it seems extremely implausible that if it could behave in a thousand different ways it would always by chance do the same thing, namely, behave according to the same laws for billions of years. Adding in the activity of countless other particles always acting in the same identical way, the unlikeliness of this behavior happening by chance reaches infinite proportions.¹⁰

Confronted with this argument, a Brute Fact theorist may ask why the only alternatives are logical necessity or mere chance? Why can't there be something

weaker than broadly logical necessity yet stronger than no reason at all? Many philosophers have proposed such an intermediate and have defined it as *nature*. That is, if one really did see a die that always rolled a six no matter how often it was rolled, one would form the hypothesis that the die was 'fixed', that is, weighted so it always came out the same. When considering the objects of nature, the 'weighting' would take the form of *natures*, physical objects like baryons or other subatomic particles which act the way they do because it is their *nature* to do so. Baryons would have a specific amount of the strong nuclear force because it is the nature of baryons to have this particular amount of force. This according to the Brute Fact theorist, would account for the fact that objects act in a lawlike way, without having to resort to God.

The problem with this defense is the Brute Fact theorist is not entitled to things such as 'natures'. Take, for example, a typical subatomic particle, like a proton. It has certain properties, like size, mass, and shape (though what is meant by the last in the light of quantum theory is rather problematic) in addition to other properties such as having nuclear forces of a certain strength. As all protons in the universe have had these specific properties, it seems appropriate to say this is the nature of protons. Given that particles exist with a certain size and mass, is it logically contingent or logically necessary for these particles to also have a strong nuclear force of a certain strength, or for that matter, a strong nuclear force at all? The same question can be asked with regard to all of the particle's other properties. If it is asserted that it is logically necessary for the protons to have all of the properties they do, then one is not a Brute Fact theorist and is forced back to the weaker version of the Necessary Universe theory.

If, on the contrary, it is asserted that it is logically contingent for the proton to have all of the properties it has, then one is saying it could have been different. This is one definition of contingency. If it could have been different, then why it is the way it is? However, the naturalistic version of the Brute Fact theory maintains there is no ultimate reason why any proton has the set of values it does. It is merely a brute fact. This brings the argument back to the Brute Fact theory regarding natures, and is therefore pointless. Whatever natures the objects have in a brute fact universe, they have by chance.

Further, why does every object have the same set of properties at every moment of its existence instead of another set of properties? Based on the Brute Fact theory the only answer which can be given is coincidence. Thus, if something's nature is defined as the set of stable properties it has over time (assuming the objects properties remain the same over time) then whatever set of properties the object has, it has for no reason. But then the nature of the object would simply be the set of stable properties it coincidentally has over a period of time. If this is what it is to have a nature, then this provides no reason at all why having a nature should provide ontological stability, for coincidence is not a guarantor of stability.

Keith Parsons responds to the problem of uniformity and stability in an appeal to natures. Parsons seems to come down on both sides of the Brute Fact/Necessary Universe division as he writes:

[T]he powers and liabilities of one body may be explained in terms of the powers and liabilities of constituent bodies and those in turn by even more fundamental entities. Presumably, though, rock bottom is eventually reached. At present, rock bottom would be the powers and liabilities of such entities as quarks and electrons. Since, by definition, the ultimate features of the universe will constitute the ultimate terms of scientific explanation, science clearly cannot account for those absolutely basic features. Hence, atheists must concede that they cannot explain why the laws of nature are as they are.¹¹

Parsons' statement is a classic exposition of the Brute Fact theory. He writes there is no explanation as to why the ultimate laws of the universe are as they are. Therefore, they do not exist out of broadly logical necessity. However, in the very next paragraph Parsons goes on to write:

To say that there is no explanation of why a quark, given that it is a fundamental particle, has the powers and liabilities that it possesses, seems tantamount to saying that there is no explanation of why a quark is a quark. Surely anything with set of powers and liabilities that those possessed by quarks would simply not be quark. After all, what is a fundamental particle over and above a particular set of powers and liabilities? . . . Quarks are just quarks; that is the bottom line.¹²

The critical point to note is that this paragraph suggests quarks and other entities have the properties they do out of logical necessity, which is a restatement of Necessary Universe theory. This point is critical because in the quote preceding this one, Parsons seems to be saying if some entity *e* is the kind of entity it is, then it must have the properties that those kind of entities have. If *e* is a quark, then necessarily, it must have quarkian properties. Thus, Parsons seems to be holding to two contradictory theories. Either the properties an entity has are contingent or they are necessary. Parsons writes:

[O]n the hypothesis that the universe is infinitely old, atheism seems to explain everything that can be reasonable thought explicable. Each state of the universe is explained by a previous state and the laws of nature. The demand to know the cause of the set of states 'as a whole' is incoherent, or, if allowed, does not require an answer in terms of anything transcending the universe. The laws of nature reduce in the final analysis to the powers and liabilities of the fundamental physical stuff. The demand to know why the ultimate physical stuff has the powers and liabilities it has is incoherent. This is because the fundamental stuff just would not be *that* stuff if its powers and liabilities were different. Finally, though we can imagine there never having been anything or there all along having been something else in existence, the presupposition that our universe has always existed explains why these other 'possibilities' were never actualized.¹³

This reply is inadequate. Ignoring for the moment the possibility of the Necessary Deity, there are three possible reasons why the entities of the universe act in the manner they do. They are:

(8.5) The entities of the universe act in the manner they do for no reason (Brute Fact).

(8.6) The entities of the universe act in the manner they do out of their own De Re necessity (Necessary Universe).

(8.7) The entities of the universe act in the manner they do out of their own De Dicto necessity.

In (8.5) the entities of the universe act in the way they do for no reason in every space and time in which they exist, which is simply the logical implication of the Brute Fact theory. If this option is ignored, along with the option that the entities of the universe are caused to be in the manner they are by a transcendent necessary being, then the only logical possibility which is left is that they act in the manner they do out of their own inner necessity. There are the two different kinds of necessity, De Re and De Dicto. If the entities of the universe behave in the manner they do out of their own inner De Re necessity, then this describes the Necessary Universe theory. However, there is also De Dicto necessity to be considered. This may be the option Parsons is asserting and can be stated as:

(8.8) There is no reason why there are quarks.

(8.9) If there are quarks they must, because of their nature, behave **in the manner they** do.

(8.10) The reason that quarks (and other entities) have the nature they do is simply because a nature is the summary of the powers and liabilities they have.

(8.11) Any attempt to ask why the quarks have the powers and liabilities they do is, on an atheistic basis, incoherent.

This argument is an attempt by Parsons to account for the nature of the entities in the universe in terms of De Dicto necessity. If Parsons used De Re necessity, even from an atheistic view, an explanation rather than an account could be provided for quarks and other entities behaving in the manner they do, and this would exemplify the weaker version of the Necessary Universe theory. Parsons, in De Dicto necessity terms, is saying things just act the way they do because that is what they are. For example, although quarks do not have to exist, if there are quarks, then necessarily they act as quarks do. But this argument simply will not work. Although it may be true that any particular quark *q*, will not be a quark if it does not act like a quark, this hardly means it has to act like a quark. De Dicto necessity has no 'strength' in it; it cannot force things to be the way they are.

For any object, say a quark, a distinction can be made between 'being a quark' (or any other kind of object) and the entity which is the quark. If the entity which is the quark has the properties of a quark and behaves as quarks do, then it will be a quark. Why does the entity act like a quark? If De Re necessity is used to answer

this question, then the Necessary Universe theory is being used. If De Dicto necessity is used to answer this question, then the entity is a quark only because it has the properties of a quark and behaves like a quark. Similarly, a man is necessarily considered a 'sitting man' only if he is sitting; this is De Dicto necessity. However, it is not necessary to the concept of man that he sit, he could stand up or lie down; it is only accidental that he sit.¹⁴ Therefore, no necessary reason exists to explain why the man should be sitting rather than do something else. Analogously, no reason exists to explain why the entity which is the quark should be a quark. The fact it has the properties of a quark and behaves like a quark is accidental to the entity. Thus, there is no reason for it to continue to behave like a quark.

In essence, De Dicto necessity is just a disguised brute fact. If the requirement to be an *X* is that an object *o* behave in a certain manner, and this certain object *O* does so, then *O* is an *X* (*De Dicto necessity*). But either *O* behaves in this manner because it could not behave otherwise, or it behaves in this manner by chance. If it could not do otherwise, one must ask why. Is it external forces or internal? Necessity in external forces leads to the Necessary Deity, which the atheist must rule out. Necessity in internal forces leads to Necessary Universe. This however, leaves that *O* acts the way it does by chance, for no reason. So even though *O* is an *X* because it acts in the correct manner, it did so only by chance, and therefore could have done otherwise and not have been an *X*. Hence, De Dicto necessity provides *no ground* for the orderly behavior of entities.

In effect, Parsons' argument only delays the inevitable. The question is, does an object that is like a quark in some respects, (size, mass, etc.) need to have all of the other properties of quarks? That is, does the fact that *Q* has properties *A*, *B*, and *C* entail that *Q* must have some other property *D*, with *D* standing for any other property that *Q* has? If it is entailed, then it is basically the Necessary Universe theory. If it is not entailed, then it is either Necessary Deity or the Brute Fact theory, and of course the atheist must choose the Brute Fact theory. It is useless to argue that if a quark did not act in the manner it did, it would not be a quark, for on this accounting there is no reason for it to be a quark. The problem is the atheist has only two possible positions, Brute Fact and Necessary Universe. As in the case of Parsons, one of these positions will be chosen and then when the inadequacies of it are shown, the opposite, completely contradictory position will be embraced, or else an attempt will be made to combine the two. This confusion is understandable because there is no middle ground. Only pure chance and pure necessity exists.

Hence, Parsons' assertion that if there were some 'fundamental stuff' which acted the way that it did because if it acted differently it would not be that particular stuff, although true, is useless in accounting for the orderliness of the universe. This account does not explain why the universe could not have been chaotic, indeed the odds from a Brute Fact understanding of the universe are infinitely greater for the universe to be chaotic. Parsons reasoning can only account for the orderliness of the universe if the natures of the universe are De Re necessary. But then that would be the Necessary Universe theory. If this is true, then Parsons cannot state that "atheists. . . cannot explain why the ultimate laws of nature are as they are."¹⁵

When employing the Necessary Universe theory, the atheist can explain why things are as they are by utilizing the laws of logic.

The appeal to 'natures' for an explanation of the orderly and uniform behavior of objects in a brute fact universe fails. Some may still feel that atheists must have some intermediate position between pure possibility (Brute Fact theory) and pure Necessity (Necessary Universe theory). Another attempt to account for the orderliness and uniformity of the universe is from the nature of law. As demonstrated above, the 'standard' theory of laws is the Regularity theory. However, the Regularity theory is not the only theory which defines the laws of nature. Armstrong, in opposition to the Regularity theory, puts forth a theory that the laws of nature are in fact relations between universals. Let us briefly consider the meaning of a law and how it is distinguished from a force or property. In general, laws describe the behavior of entities. If some entity has a force of attraction, then under a certain set of circumstances, it will attract other objects with a certain strength. A law universalizes this by stating any entity of that kind, under those same set of circumstances will attract other objects at that rate.

Some believe the laws of nature are more diverse than this. Without stating the laws of nature are logically necessary, which would be the Necessary Universe theory, one could believe that the laws of nature hold some intermediate status which is greater than being merely descriptive of brute fact happenings. Armstrong, with regard to his theory that the laws of nature are universals, writes:

Suppose it to be a law that *F*s are *G*s. *F*-ness and *G*-ness are taken to be universals. A certain relation, a relation of non-logical or contingent necessitation, holds between *F*-ness and *G*-ness. This state of affairs may be symbolized as '*N(F,G)*'. Although *N(F,G)* does not obtain by logical necessity, if it does obtain then it entails the corresponding Humean or cosmic uniformity: $(x) (Fx \rightarrow Gx)$. That each *F* is a *G*, however does not entail that *F*-ness has *N* to *G*-ness:

$$(8.12) N(F,G) \rightarrow (x) (Fx \rightarrow Gx).$$

$$(8.13) (x) (Fx \rightarrow Gx) \neq N(F,G).^{16}$$

For example, an *F* might mean 'being a neutron', while a *G* might mean 'having a strong nuclear force of level *L*'. Based on (8.12) it is a necessary truth that 'being a neutron' will entail 'having a strong nuclear force of level *L*'. On the other hand, (8.13) shows this relation is not logically necessary. The fact every neutron has a strong nuclear force of level *L* does not entail the broadly logical truth that if something is an *F* it will have *G*. That is, possible worlds exist where *F*'s do not have *G*.

So what kind of necessity is it? As Armstrong himself states, "[T]he entailment in (8.12) is a very puzzling one."¹⁷ If the relation is not that of logical necessity, as (8.13) states, then it must be some kind contingent necessity. But what kind of contingent necessity? Armstrong defends the view that the relation *N(F,G)* is a universal which links other universals. In Armstrong's view the status of *N* is a

primitive. He writes, "In the end, . . . the relation of nomic necessitation, N , will have to be accepted as a primitive. But if we can also accept that $N(F, G)$ is a universal, instantiated in the positive instances of the law, . . . it will be much easier to accept the primitive nature of N ."¹⁸ Consequently, necessity becomes a relation between universals. This has some initial plausibility. For, universals are seemingly necessary things, and there could be some sort of necessary relation between them. Thus, 'being a neutron' would be a universal, as would 'having a strong nuclear force of level L '. If true, then there would be a connection between the different neutrons having the same nuclear force. Therefore, it might be argued, that the universe has the universals it does by chance, but once the universals were there, they would be universal, that is, binding on every particular that shared in them. As Armstrong writes:

Transfer in thought the concept of necessitation from the sphere of particular states of affairs, taken simply as particular, to the sphere of sorts or types of states of affairs, that is, universals. Instead of a 's being F necessitating it to be the case that a is G , without the benefit of law, we have instead something's being F necessitating that something to be G , where a type of state of affairs (the universal F) necessitates a type of state of affairs (the universal G). It is clear then *if such a relation holds between the universals*, then it is automatic that *each* particular F determines that it is a G . That is just the instantiation of the universal $N(F, G)$ in particular cases.¹⁹

One must understand Armstrong's meaning of the term universal. Armstrong himself is a physicalist. For him, there is nothing more to universals than the particulars and the properties they possess. That is, universals are the particulars which all share a certain property. Thus, 'redness' is itself all the red in existence. As Armstrong writes:

Universals, I take to be monadic, that is properties, or else dyadic, triadic . . . n -adic, that is relations. Universals are governed by a principle of Instantiation. A property must be a property of some real particular; a relation must hold between real particulars. What is real, however, is not to be confined to the present. Past, present and future I take to be all and equally real. A universal need not be instantiated *now*.²⁰

With this in mind, Armstrong's theory maintains that universals are composed of all the particular instances that there are, and the necessitation that some particular F is a G comes from the fact that both are types of universals which have a certain relation between them (and thus compose another universal). If all F 's are G , *then* one can see why any particular F is a G .

This theory is impossible to justify from the Brute Fact point of view. For in this theory, the fact that all F 's are G 's is not a logically necessary truth. Possible worlds exist where no F is a G , and other possible worlds exist where some F 's are G 's. Thus, in a broadly logical sense it is possible for any particular F to be a G . So why are all F 's G 's in the actual world? If it is only a brute fact, then any necessity is lacking. If there is some sort of necessitation, what is it? It can not be

logical, for Armstrong admits that the laws of nature are not logically necessary. It might be De Dicto necessity, but as seen in the Parsons illustration, this provides no reason for the necessity of the connection between F and G ; *indeed, it rules it out*. Just because it is a fact, that every time Smith washes his car, coincidentally, it rains, does not mean Smith is doing something which causes it to rain. Thus, even if universals exist which are laws of nature and there is a relation between them, it does not mean there is any necessity in the relation between them.

It is still possible to ask why any particular F is a G ? Let us suppose that in the actual world W , there are many F 's and all of them are G 's. It is logically possible that any particular F in W is not a G . There are possible worlds such as W' which is very close to W , just like it in fact except that some particular F is not a G , just as there are possible worlds where Smith washes his car and it fails to rain (it snows instead). Why isn't W' the actual world instead of W ? If W is the actual world by chance rather than some other world, then there is no necessity (other than De Dicto) in all F 's being G 's. If some reason exists other than the Necessary Deity, then it must be logical necessity, for then W' would be an impossible world. And if so, it is logically necessary that every F be a G ; for the worlds where all F 's are not G 's are impossible. This however, contradicts Armstrong's theory, indeed he argues strongly against the laws of nature being logically necessary.²¹ He writes:

But if explanation has to stop short of the Absolute, then we have to accept brute fact, that is, contingency, at some point. . . . The system of connections may be simplified, and brought under higher laws. But when all of this has been done, is there any hope of demonstrating the necessity of the ultimate connections? I do not believe that there is. Necessity can be asserted, but it cannot be demonstrated or even made plausible.²²

If, as Armstrong states, universals are nothing more than the totality of particulars (red being all the reds that will ever exist), then there is nothing to 'force' every particular to behave in the proper manner. In this view there is nothing 'over' the particulars to guide their behavior. On the other hand, if universals are considered abstract objects that somehow control the behavior of the particulars, then one has moved to the Necessary Universe theory and abandoned the Brute Fact theory. Armstrong's theory fails as an explanation of how brute fact can give us order and uniformity in the universe.

The attempt to find some intermediate status between logical necessity and sheer brute fact is in vain. Anything less than logical necessity always leaves the question of why something is the way it is. For example it is possible to ask why any F is a G , or why some neutron at some time has the strong nuclear force at the level it does. Any being, force, or law that is itself not necessary in the broadly logical sense can have the same question put to it. Ultimately, in giving an account of anything, or of everything, the entity, force or law, which determines why that thing is must also be accounted for. Either something has a reason for existing in the manner it does, or it doesn't. If not, then one has brute fact. If it does, then that reason must itself be broadly logically necessary or not broadly logically necessary.

If logically necessary, then one does not have the Brute Fact theory. If the reason is not logically necessary, then it could have been other than it is, and again is brute fact. By definition the ultimate thing which is the reason for something being the way it is cannot depend upon anything else. Thus, we are back to either brute fact or logical necessity-there is ultimately no intermediate position.

The Brute Fact theorist might also defend his view by stating that, granting the falsity of the Necessary Universe or Necessary Deity theories, it is logically possible that by chance there is some sort of order in whichever universe exists. That is, there are all sorts of laws which might be obeyed by any objects that exist (remembering that to obey a law of nature can merely mean the objects are consistently describable by it). Indeed, there are doubtlessly an infinite number of law orders by which a universe might be governed. If so, then there are all sorts of law orders that the actual universe might have followed. To be sure, which law order is the one the actual universe follows would be a matter of chance, but it could be argued that in all probability some law order was followed. This argument has in fact been made by B.C. Johnson who writes:

A version of the argument from natural laws can be offered which rests upon estimates of probability. The argument claims that it is very improbable for the universe to have become law-governed by chance, since chaos is much more likely. Now there are an infinite number of different possible sets of possible laws. To give just one example: it is a natural law that gravity accelerates falling bodies in a vacuum at thirty-two feet per second per second. This acceleration could possibly have been thirty-three feet per second per second, or thirty four . . . and so on to infinity. Thus, there are an infinite number of different sets of possible natural laws, and an infinite number of possible different law-governed universes. Therefore, even if there are an infinite number of possible chaotic universes-universes not governed by natural laws-the probability would still be fifty-fifty that a law governed universe would exist. There would be as many potential instances of law-governed universes as there are non-law-governed universes. When one flips a coin, there are as many possible instances of heads as there are of tails and this is the basis for our judgment that the chance of getting tails is fifty-fifty. The same point holds for the chance of 'getting' a law-governed universe. But we can go even further. A chaotic universe would by definition have no natural laws. Therefore, no method exists to distinguish one possible chaotic universe from another in terms of natural law. Since natural law is the only factor relevant in distinguishing one possible universe from another in this argument, we would be able to distinguish only a vague possible chaotic universe. Since we can distinguish an infinite number of possible law-governed universes, the probability is infinitely high that our universe could have been law-governed by chance.²³

There are several things wrong with Johnson's argument. First, he states at the end of the paragraph that one can distinguish an infinite number of possible law orders, while there is only one chaotic universe (since by definition a chaotic universe is one without law). Due to this the odds of a law-governed universe generated by chance are infinitely high. This argument is clearly fallacious. In terms of natural law the ability to distinguish between chaotic universes is

irrelevant. The point is there seems to be an infinite number of possible chaotic universes which would have several differences between them. One difference would be the number of objects in existence in the different chaotic universes. Some would have 6 objects, some 6 billion, and so on. One can non-contradictorily think of all sorts of different chaotic universes, and can therefore distinguish between them.

Another weakness can be found through William Craig's example of a library with an infinite number of books.²⁴ In this case half of the books will be colored black, while the other half will be split between an enormous number of other colors, indeed an infinite amount (ignoring the problem of whether there can be an infinite number of colors). The black books represent the chaotic universes, while the books with other colors represent the law ordered universes. Suppose the issue is black books versus books of any other color. Johnson asserts that because on one side there are only black colored books while on the other side there are an infinite number of other colored books, the 'odds' of picking a black book by randomly selecting one in the infinite library are infinitesimal. This is obviously absurd as half the books in the library, are, by stipulation black. In actuality the odds are 50-50 that a black book would be selected by a random process. In a sense whether or not one can distinguish between different chaotic universes is itself irrelevant. The important factor is in which possible worlds the universes exist or could exist, not which law structures could.

Let us imagine a certain universe with a certain law structure L and which has n number of objects in it. It does not matter what number n is, however the stipulation is that it is very large, comparable to the number of objects in our own universe. Let us also imagine there are at every point in time 10 different logically permissible actions which the objects in that universe could do, but only one of them would involve following L . That is, there are nine actions which if taken by any object would violate L . For simplicity's sake let us imagine this holds at every instant of space and time and for every object in that universe.

The odds the objects will violate L are enormous as compared to those of every object doing the 'right' thing (always obeying L) by chance. The odds of the objects following L are only one in ten and in any decent-sized universe, the odds that a law structure will be obeyed are quickly reduced to infinitesimal proportions. Yet this is being very generous in the estimation of the 'odds', for in reality the chances are vastly smaller than one in ten. For this reason, it seems that Johnson is completely wrong in his estimation of the 'odds'. There are an infinite number of universes where objects do not obey a law order.

Second, contrary to Johnson's argument, the only alternative to a law-governed universe is not a chaotic one. There is an in-between position which states universes could exist that have different law structures at different times, or in different parts of space, or both. Universes could exist which have a law structure that breaks down into chaos at a certain point in time. The possible combinations are endless. The important fact is that for every universe which is completely under the sway of one law structure, there are an infinite number which are not.

Third, Johnson is wrong when he surmises that if there were an infinite number of chaotic universes and an infinite number of ordered or law-governed universes there would be a fifty-fifty chance that a law-governed universe would result. The rationale behind this builds on the point made above. Consider again the illustration of a library with an infinite number of books. Suppose this infinite library exists and in it there are one trillion red books for every black book. The books are ordered thusly, one trillion red books, one black book, one trillion red books, one black book, and so on to infinity. Let us imagine that someone had to try and pick out a black book blindfolded. Remember the library has been described as having an infinite number of red books and an infinite number of black books. However, this hardly means the chances of the blindfolded person getting a black book are equal to that of getting a red book. In actuality there would only be one chance in a trillion that the blindfolded person would get a black book. The same principle applies to law-governed universes as compared to chaotic or non-uniformly law governed universes.

Johnson might make a rejoinder to the argument given above. His argument would deny the relevancy of the above principle and might look like this:

(8.14) There are an infinite number of both law-ordered and chaotic universes.

(8.15) All infinities are equal in number, that is, the members of different infinite sets can be matched one on one, so that all members of both sets are used up.²⁵

(8.16) The number of law ordered universes is therefore equal to the number of chaotic universes.

(8.17) This being the case, there is a 50-50 chance that the actual world will be a law-ordered one rather than a chaotic one.

(8.18) We got lucky and have a law-ordered universe as the actual universe.

This objection has some initial plausibility as it seems to deny that the example of one trillion red books and one black book is an accurate representation of the nature of infinity. Upon reflection however, it reveals a number of difficulties.

First, if there are an infinite number of law-ordered universes, then there are also an infinite number of universes which are law-ordered up to a certain point in time and then become chaotic, or switch over to a different law order. If this is true, there is an equal chance that our universe will either become chaotic or switch over to a different law structure at any point in the future (like ten minutes from now). This seems absurd.

Johnson's argument has an even worse problem which will be demonstrated in the following text. It has already been explained that some physicists estimate there are 10^{80} baryons in the known universe. Let us suppose there are exactly this number in existence. It would seem there are an infinite number of possible worlds containing this specific number of baryons. However, it is also possible there are

an infinite number of possible worlds containing $10^{80} + 1$ baryons, $10^{80} + 2$ baryons, and so forth. In this case, there would be an equal number of possible worlds containing 10^{80} baryons, because as stated above all infinities are equal to one another. Therefore, a 50% chance of the actual world having 10^{80} baryons should exist. However, this same analysis can be applied to all the other numbers and would basically mean there is a 50% chance of the actual world having $10^{80} + 1$ baryons, a 50% chance of the actual world having $10^{80} + 2$ baryons, and so forth. In effect, there would be an infinite quantity of possible numbers of baryons, each of which would have a 50% chance of actually existing.

To further demonstrate this point I offer the following example. In the actual world, George Washington was the first president of the United States. Indeed, it seems there are an infinite number of worlds where George Washington was the first president. With this in mind the ensuing argument can be created:

(8.19) There are an infinite number of possible worlds where George Washington was the first president of the United States, and an infinite number of possible worlds where he was not.

(8.20) All infinities are equal in number. (See 8.15)

(8.21) So the number of worlds where George Washington is the first president of the United States is equal to the number of worlds where he is not.

(8.22) This being the case, there is a 50-50 chance that the actual world will be one where George Washington is the first president rather than someone else being the first president, or there never being a first president. (Granting Brute Fact theory.)

(8.23) We got lucky and got a possible world in which Washington was the first president.

There are countless other individuals who might have been the first president. John Adams, Benedict Arnold, Abraham Lincoln, Bill Clinton, and even Larry Powers could have been the first president of the United States. Not only could they have been the first president in some worlds, it seems there are an infinite number of worlds where they each were. Indeed, there seems to be an infinite number of individuals, most of whom never existed in the actual world, who could have been the first president in an infinite number of worlds. Thus there were an infinite number of individuals who, by the logic of the argument above, each had a 50% chance of being the first president of the United States in the actual world. It is obvious that far too many 50%s exist in this theory, and therefore something is very wrong with its use of infinity.

The correct way to construe the question at hand is to state that every law ordered world has only one way to remain law ordered and an infinite number of ways to become chaotic, or switch to another law structure. Therefore, the odds against getting a universe which is completely governed according to one law structure are

enormous. In the actual world there is one way for things to stay on track, while there are at every moment a vast, even infinite, number of ways for things to get off track by becoming chaotic or switching to another law structure.

Calculating the odds in this manner eliminates the absurdities seen in Johnson's use of infinity. In spite of its *prima facie* plausibility, the argument that there are as many consistently law-ordered universes as there are chaotic or changeable law-ordered universes fails. The odds that the vast number of discrete objects and events, or bundles will always act in a uniform manner for no reason at all are so low, they are infinitesimal. This improbability is of the second order kind. That is, there is a great improbability that a completely ordered universe will occur by chance and no necessity that *some* ordered universe will occur by chance.

An objection to my argument will be outlined below. If God has a libertarian kind of free-will, then his choices are indeterminate. Suppose there are a billion possible worlds which are all equally desirable to God. He wants to create a world, but as there are a billion which are equally good, his choice is indeterminate. In this situation, the selection of one of the worlds is necessary, but the fact that a particular world is chosen rather than any of the others is itself very improbable. My reply to this objection is in the case outlined above, there are reasons why something improbable necessarily happened; a billion equally desirable worlds, God's determination to create a world, and God's will being genuinely indeterminate.

Another objection against the argument I have given has been voiced by several thinkers.²⁶ They put the argument briefly, so to fill it in I will 'borrow' principles from others. The argument may be simply stated as:

(8.24) The universe is infinite in time, or in space, or in both, or there are an infinite number of different parallel universes, or some combination of the above.²⁷ At any rate, there is an infinite amount of space and time or universes in existence.

(8.25) In an infinite amount of space and time anything that is logically possible will happen, somewhere at sometime.²⁸

(8.26) Since (granting the falsity of the Necessary Universe and Necessary Deity theories), it is logically possible that there arise a universe as vast and as ordered as ours by chance, the Principle of Plenitude will insure that somewhere and sometime it actually will happen.

(8.27) So, not only is it possible that our universe arise by chance, it is necessary that it do so. Therefore, the argument against the Brute Fact theory accounting for the universe around us fails.

This argument is ingenious, but fails on a number of counts. First, the belief that the universe is infinite, or even that it could be infinite, is debatable. Philosophers such as Craig do not believe an infinite number of extra-mental, concrete things exist. Some believe current evidence shows the universe is finite both temporally

and spatially. The idea that other universes exist has been met with skepticism and has drawn fire from some philosophers.²⁹

Second, even if there really is an infinite amount of space, time and physical objects, it does not necessarily follow that it is logically possible for anything to happen. One can imagine a universe infinite in space and time that consists merely of an infinite number of steel balls all at an equal distance from each other, revolving around their own centers, for all eternity. Or one can imagine an infinite number of universes operating under the same law structure. In this particular situation, it is not true that anything which is logically possible could happen. In any case, it seems false that given an infinite amount of space and time anything which is logically possible will happen.

Third, the argument, if it proves anything, proves too much. Let us imagine the present universe has acted the way it has up until now by chance. If anything which is logically possible will happen, then it is possible for everything to become chaotic in the next second. Indeed, by the analysis given above, the probability that the universe will become chaotic in the next second, or sometime shortly thereafter, is far greater than the probability that the whole vast, intricate universe will continue to follow the same law structure for no reason. Remember, this analysis could be carried out at any point in time or in any section of space. Therefore, it is infinitely more probable that the universe we dwell in will become chaotic rather than continue to act in an orderly fashion for no reason. Thus, the principle which states in an infinite amount of space and time anything will happen, changes nothing. The odds of us living in a chance generated orderly universe are still practically nil.

Fourth, as stated by Robert Shapiro when speaking of the origin of life on earth, the entire argument leads to skepticism. Shapiro writes:

There is one way in which any event, however improbable, can be made probable. One need only select a model for the universe which postulates that it is infinite. . . . Thus everything happens somewhere. Our own planet is obviously the one where life began. Of course this explanation can be used to legitimate any event. The earth may have been a jumbled heap of chemicals last night. Suddenly, by a random fluctuation, we, our memories, our possessions, and our civilization were created. This event also should occur once in an infinite universe. Perhaps this was the place. The above argument will not hold if evidence indicates that the universe is definitely finite in its extent. Even without such evidence, the argument is not a useful one.³⁰

Shapiro underestimates the force of the argument he presents for not only should the creation of the present world from a jumble of chemicals happen once, it should happen an infinite number of times. For there are an infinite number of different jumbles of chemicals, and an infinite number of ways they could be rearranged to form the present world. Of course, the above argument does not mean it is probable that the earth was randomly created an instant ago. Shapiro simply means that skepticism is the end result given the principle in an infinite amount of space and time anything will happen.

An additional point needs to be considered. Although I have been speaking of the universal extent of natural laws, this need not be taken literally. For example, it may be true that not every subatomic particle in the entire history of the universe has behaved strictly according to the laws of nature. There may be a particle in the Andromeda galaxy which deviated by 5% from the normal strong nuclear force for one trillionth of a second. This certainly does not seem impossible. The basic orderliness of the universe would not be destroyed if there were in fact many more similar deviations. However, this can be pushed too far. Both scientific experiments and ordinary observation demonstrate the universe does in fact operate in a very orderly fashion. Occasional variations may possibly occur, but the overwhelming compliance of the objects in the universe to the existing natural laws is in about as much need of an explanation as if all of the particles in the universe were to do so.

As most contemporary philosophers are Brute Fact theorists of one kind or another, one would think theories about how all of this is supposed to work with detailed defenses of the plausibility of a chance generated universe would be common. This, however, is not the case. Most of the philosophers who accept Brute Fact have no problem believing the universe was created by chance. More accurately, they adjudge the alternatives to the Brute Fact Theory implausible. The general belief is that the existence of a logically necessary God is impossible and that the existence of a non-logically necessary God doesn't explain anything. I concur with the second part of this argument. Perhaps the defenders of the Brute Fact theory and I are mirroring each other by attempting to establish the truth of our hypotheses by destroying the alternatives. After all, if necessary existence is impossible for concrete beings, then all concrete reality has to be contingent. I can find no fault with their basic methodology: I do find fault with their failure to show the plausibility of their own theory.

Let us examine this issue through the eyes of three of the greatest knights of philosophical atheism. J.L. Mackie offers both a defense of the Brute Fact Theory and an attack on the theistic alternative. Writing on the issue of the regularity of the universe he states:

At this stage we are forced back into reliance on *a priori* judgements. Although we are using the empirical premiss that there is temporal order, that there are pervasive regularities, the use we are making of it depends on an *a priori* assumption about probabilities: the probability judgements themselves can no longer be based on experience. Since regularities *are* pervasive, we cannot derive a low probability for them from any rarity with which they are found in the world. It is not easy to see what *a priori* judgements we can make about this. It does not follow, for example, from the fact that *fundamental* regularities are necessarily unexplained, on a naturalist approach, that they are, given that approach, highly improbable *a priori*.³¹

Mackie takes issue with the idea that prior to experience, one would expect a chaotic universe if it was ultimately created by chance. He argues the *a priori*

judgment that the probability of the occurrence of regularity is low on an empirical basis is unjustified as one is surrounded by pervasive regularities. He then adds it is difficult to understand how one can make a priori judgements about what is probable or not. Just because fundamental regularities are not explained in the Brute Fact Theory does not mean they are improbable a priori. A similar argument is given by Michael Scriven, who writes, "It is not contrary to the laws of chance that there should be intelligence in the Universe any more than it is puzzling that an unbiased die should throw the series 1,2,3,4,5,6,1,2,3,4. It would be very puzzling if this happened many times in a row, but there are not several universes in a row: there is only one."³²

The basic presupposition in both Mackie and Scriven's arguments is that experience provides the knowledge of how things are and how they can be. They assume the only way to know if something is improbable is to find empirical evidence dictating the thing's improbability.

My response to this challenge is simply a restatement of what has already been argued, but from an a priori or logical schema of probability and not an a posteriori or empirical one. If, on a logical basis, there are ten ways an object can act and no reason why one of the ways should be preferred to the others, then it is extremely suspicious that it is improbable a priori for it to always act in one uniform way. While Mackie and Scriven are correct in stating our knowledge of the pervasive regularity of the universe is empirically derived, this by itself does not entail that all of our knowledge about how the universe could act is empirical. The a priori judgment that given ten equally viable ways of acting should result in a totally random behavior, seems to me as certain as our knowledge of the regularities of the universe, indeed more certain. While this judgement is a priori, it is still ultimately based on the law of contradiction and thus seems to be absolutely certain. Contrary to Mackie, one cannot know a priori that the incredible regularities we perceive around us are accounted for by chance, the lack of reason.

Mackie believes that the addition of a God as an explanation for the regularities in the universe does not really explain anything. He writes:

We are now comparing two rival hypotheses, one that there is no further cause or explanation of the complex physical universe, the other that there is a god who created it.³³

But the greatest weakness of this otherwise attractive argument is that some reason is required for making God the one exception to the supposed need for something else to depend on: why should God, rather than anything else, be taken as the only satisfactory termination of the regress?³⁴

Since it is always a further question whether a concept is instantiated or not, no matter how much it contains, the existence even of a being whose essence included existence would not be self-explanatory: there might have failed to be any such thing. . . . The existence of this being [God] is not logically necessary; it does not exist in all possible worlds; in what way, then, does it necessarily exist in this world and satisfy the

demand for a sufficient reason?³⁵

The reason Mackie cannot accept God as a sufficient reason for everything is that he rejects the possibility of a logically necessary God. As quoted above, he argues that even if the concept of God as a being whose essence includes existence were believed, it does not mean this being exists. He then correctly shows that a non-logically necessary God would be in as much need of an explanation as everything else.

Mackie has missed the real point of a necessary being. A necessary being is one which exists in all possible worlds. If the being is instantiated, then it exists in every possible world. The existence of such a being, as long as it was a primary necessary being, would necessarily be self-explanatory, even if we have no explanation for its necessary existence. Mackie's question of whether such a being is instantiated, as it might still fail to exist, can only be epistemic, not ontic. If the being does exist, then necessarily it exists in every possible world, whether one knows it, or understands it or not.

Mackie does not really respond to the argument that chance would not generate an ordered universe like the one we live in. He merely retreats to an exclusion of alternative possibilities and then states there are no means with which to determine the probability of an ordered universe. I have argued against both of these positions in detail, and will therefore conclude that Mackie has failed in his attempt to adequately defend the Brute Fact Theory. Indeed, he makes no real attempt to show how chance could generate order on a vast scale.

Anthony Flew's position on this issue is similar to that of Mackie. He writes:

When the demand for precisification is pressed it seems that this limiting question will have to be explicated, either as made to measure for an answer in terms of a logically Necessary Being, or as a request to be informed as some further logically contingent fact, but of a sort felt by the questioner to be somehow less brute than law-[T]his is one of the cases where a clear light is cruel. For of the two presuppositions the first is, as we have seen logically vicious; while the second seems to be nothing more than a bit of wishfulness chastely parading in a muddle about explanation.³⁶

It is obvious that Flew's objections to the argument are the same as Mackie's: the rejection of a logically necessary being and the concept that a logically contingent being would be of no use in matters of ultimate explanation. In fact this seems to be the 'party line' for atheistic Brute Fact theorists. Bertrand Russell made a similar but much simpler statement when he said, "Until the age of eighteen I continued to believe in a Deists' God, because the First Cause argument seemed to me to be irrefutable. Then in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* I found that James Mill had taught him the refutation of that argument-namely, that it gives no answer to the question 'Who made God?'"³⁷ In his debate on the existence of God with Frederick Copleston, Russell stated, "The difficulty of this argument is that I don't admit the idea of a necessary being and I don't admit that there is any particular meaning in

calling other beings 'contingent'. These phrases don't for me have a significance except within a logic that I reject. . . ."³⁸

Russell's commitment to Mackie and Flew's line of reasoning is evident as he, and they, maintain it is impossible for a necessary being to exist. In addition, they find that the possible existence of a logically contingent being provides no answer to the question of why the universe exists in the manner it does. This concept is important as it is *the* main challenge provided by atheistic Brute Fact theorists to the existence of a necessary God. It should be noted that none of the answers provided by these thinkers to the problem of lawfulness in the universe succeed. With this the discussion of lawfulness in the universe will be closed. The next topic for investigation will be the question of being in Brute Fact Theory.

Why, if some being is in existence, does it generally stay in existence over time unless something happens to it? If things can exist for no reason at all, can they not 'pop' into existence for no reason at all? The obvious answers, which stem from intuition and experience, are if something is in existence it will stay in existence, and things do not come into existence out of nothing. These answers are, in fact, founded in one of the basic laws of science; the conservation of energy. Simply put, the same amount of matter/energy is always in existence. It may change form but it never begins or ceases to exist.. Therefore, it is not only a matter of common experience, but an axiom of science. The crucial point to consider is no *logical* reason exists to explain why things should be this way. Why then is there continued existence over time?

One philosopher who has addressed this question at length is David Braine. His argument is stated as follows:

(8.28) If the existence of ordinary things has a cause in the respect picked out, it is not anything temporal because temporal things are impotent to cause existence in this respect (the reality of time makes this plain to us), and it is not anything with the property *M* since it is the property *M* which makes the temporal things impotent. (The question is as to why temporal and ordinary things are impotent in this way. The reason, we will say, lies in their being *M*: this is the middle term "*M*" which we seek.)

(8.29) The existence of ordinary things, in the respect picked out, has a cause.

(8.30) Therefore the cause of the existence of ordinary things, in the respect picked out, does not have the property *M*.

(8.31) To be a cause, and yet to lack the property *M*, implies being God: (a) it implies being in composite, intrinsically, underivative (*a se*), immediate as a cause to the existence it upholds and unique; (b) it implies being possessed of all the attributes required for a thing to be appropriately called 'God' e.g., being personal.³⁹

Braine's basic point is that the continued existence of temporal objects requires a cause as being composite and derivative by nature, they do not have the reason for their existence within them. Thus, the cause for the continued existence of temporal

objects cannot itself be temporal (or composite and derivative). Braine writes, "What it plain to us is our own impotence and the impotence of any spatial, temporal, or mundane thing, or any system of such things, to be itself the cause of its own continuation in existence, 'unqualifiedly' and 'unconditionally'"⁴⁰ Only God has the properties in question, therefore God is the cause for the continued existence of temporal objects.

While I do not disagree with this, I approach the matter somewhat differently. The existence of temporal objects, objects which continue to exist over time, is clear. As previously stated, based on Brute Fact Theory these objects ultimately exist for no reason at all. Suppose for example, that some entity *E* exists at time *T1*. On Brute Fact theory it exists at *T1* for no reason at all. Braine and many others feel to exist it needs a reason for its existence. I now grant the point made by Brute Fact theorists that things can exist for no reason at all. However, objects usually continue to exist unless they are interfered with. Say the *E* mentioned above is an elephant. The fact *E* exists at *T1* usually means it exists at the next moment, *T2*. An elephant which exists at one time does not ordinarily cease to exist at the next moment unless something pretty drastic happens, like being hit with a bomb (and in that case, the elephant's composing matter will still be in existence). But why is this true? *T1* is logically discreet from *T2*; there is no necessary connection between them. Why does the fact that an elephant exists at *T1*, mean, in the absence of destructive agents, it will exist at *T2*? As Braine states, "It is a corollary of the reality of time that the past and present have no causal role in that continuance of the substance of things. . . which is involved in the future's becoming present."⁴¹

The problem is not just, as Braine stated, that temporal objects by their nature cannot cause the continued existence of either themselves or other temporal objects. Rather the most basic problem flows from the nature of Brute Fact theory. In the Brute Fact Theory it is analytically true that ultimately everything exists for no reason at all. So the elephant's existence at *T1* and *T2* is ultimately for no reason. Logically, the existence of an elephant at *T1* provides more reason to believe the elephant will exist at *T2* than to believe anything else, like a grape, will exist at *T2*.

Why then should the elephant remain in existence? On Brute Fact theory its existence is logically contingent, and for beings whose existence is logically contingent, non-existence is just as good as existence. Why then does the great orderliness which is seen in the continuation of things exist in the universe? This problem is very similar to the problem already examined regarding the orderliness of the behavior of objects in the universe. When discussing the order of the objects of the universe many different possibilities could usually explain the objects behavior, while with existence simpliciter there are only two 'states', existence or non-existence. That is, for any particular time and any particular space an object can either exist or not exist. In addition, it is logically possible for just about anything to exist at any particular time or in any particular space. Thus, at any time and space the 'odds' some particular thing will exist by chance are just about infinitesimal. Therefore, the 'odds' that at one space and two consecutive times the same thing would continue in existence are infinitesimal. Although I gave the

example of an elephant, this discussion is really about the most basic units of being. In order for an elephant to exist, it would need to have all the right subatomic particles in the right spots at the right time. The chances of all the right particles doing this would, as already stated, be infinitesimal. It would therefore be extremely improbable for elephants or other macro objects to exist.

One possible response to all of this might be found in some sort of law of 'existence inertia' whereby anything which comes into existence remains in existence, just as an object which is moving remains in motion unless affected by some outside force. The next question is, is this law logically necessary or contingent? If necessary, then the Necessary Universe Theory is exemplified. If contingent, then one may ask why it applies to some particular object at some particular space and time. If the law is truly logically contingent, then in Brute Fact Theory it is merely by chance that it applies to that particular particle at that time and space. In other words, in Brute Fact Theory, the concept of 'existence inertia' is of no help at all.⁴²

The concept that things, if they exist, exist for some reason intrinsic to themselves is also of no use. If something exists for reasons intrinsic to itself, then it will exist in every possible world. This premise is contrary to the Brute Fact Theory and is strenuously denied by Brute Fact theorists. In fact, Brute Fact theorists have denied this for years. If God is not allowed to have the reasons for his existence intrinsic to himself, then it seems clear that magazines, shopping malls, and country music stars can't either. Further, as mentioned above, if objects exist for no reason, why do they not only remain in existence, but fail to 'pop' into existence? After all, in the Brute Fact Theory there is no important difference between coming into existence and staying in existence. Both happen for no reason at all. Thus, on Brute Fact theory, an objects coming into existence for no reason at some particular time and space is just one of the possibilities, and thus should happen frequently.

In fact, the same objections which applied to the Brute Fact Theory with regard to the orderliness and uniformity of the universe, also apply to the continued existence of objects over time. As these objections have already been examined in detail, I will not repeat them now. To quote Jonathan Kvanvig and Hugh McCann, "We conclude that *ss* [self-sustenance] does not exist, either in ephemeral substances or in any other products of creation. The claim that contingent beings are self-sustaining turns out to be false, for there is no way to give it plausibility without in the end invoking divine sustenance."⁴³

The final topic to be covered in this chapter is that of knowledge and justification. Up until now we have covered what may be called the abductive teleological argument and the abductive cosmological argument. With the question of knowledge, the terminology is somewhat different. Although the question may still be considered abductive, at a deeper level the question becomes transcendental as what is being considered are the factors which are the necessary presuppositions for knowledge. The process of an abductive argument may be considered apagogic. By showing a position predicts or retrodicts some state of affairs which contradicts the actual state of affairs, one is actually disproving that position. In addition, given

a limited number of possible positions, showing that all except one are false or impossible, shows that the remaining one is true. With the transcendental argument the structure is different. Here one considers the conditions necessary for all possible knowledge and justification. The argument given from knowledge is therefore abductive (and thus apagogic), because it shows all theories save the Necessary Deity theory are self-destructive. It is also transcendental, because building on the abductive argument it shows the existence of God is the *sine qua non* of all knowledge and justification, and that Brute Fact cannot justify knowledge. The three reasons for this are because one, in Brute Fact theory what one believes is merely a brute fact, two, brute facts are unintelligible and three, in Brute Fact theory it is impossible to predict the future or retrodict the past.

With regard to the first reason, one must remember that in Brute Fact theory all concrete objects or events are merely brute facts, that is, they are for no reason. According to widely accepted contemporary theory, knowledge is some event in a person's brain. Simply put, when one knows something is true, the brain is moving in a specific manner. But in Brute Fact theory any given brain motion is merely a brute fact, there is no necessary connection between it and anything else. For example, take some subject *S* which is in the process of thinking of some proposition *P*. *P* may be any proposition, such as 'It is raining'. When *S* thinks *P* his brain is in a certain state. In the Brute Fact theory, that *S* has *P* is a brute fact or a matter of chance, and that this certain brain state and motion is connected to *P* is a matter of chance, and finally that *P* has anything to do with the actual state of affairs (e.g., that it actually is raining) is a brute fact.

Therefore, if *S* is thinking *P* it is because his brain assumes that state ultimately for no reason at all. Based on this, there is no justification for thinking that *P*, or any other proposition is true, which undercuts both knowledge and justification. It would merely be a matter of luck that one's thought process had anything to do with reality.

The human brain accurately learns about its environment. In a recent book, Alvin Plantinga likens human beings to things designed to operate in a certain fashion in a certain environment.⁴⁴ Even if one does not accept all of Plantinga's theory, it is still unquestionably true that human beings have extremely complex bodies and brains which must operate within narrow constraints to be effective. However, this can only be true if one assumes the brain and the environment are stable. The Brute Fact Theory provides no reason for believing this. The brain is an incredibly complex machine. For it to work well a huge number of cells have to work together correctly, and as previously shown, the odds of the cells in a brain behaving in the right manner by chance are infinitesimal. Hence, in the Brute Fact Theory, the chances we will have knowledge are infinitesimal.

When one thinks, one thinks temporally, that is, one thought follows another. In attempting to 'think something out', thoughts should follow one another so that (hopefully) there is a logical as well as a temporal sequence. However, in the Brute Fact Theory no logical connection exists between thoughts; they do not necessarily have anything to do with one another. *S* thinks *P*1, then *P*2 then *P*3, but there is no

necessary relation between any of them. No chain of reasoning could be trusted as one thought would follow another for no reason. There could be no reason for beliefs, and this kills all knowledge and justification.

When one looks at an object, say a black cat, one is reacting to stimuli. An object, in this case a black cat, is presented to someone in a certain manner, and from this stems the belief that there is a black cat in front of this person. But if everything is a brute fact, and all facts have no necessary relation with each other, then the fact an object is presented to the brain in a certain manner means nothing. For no brute fact entails any other. Thus, the fact a black cat was presented to someone in a certain manner would have no weight in there actually being a black cat in front of that person.

Another problem which occurs with any epistemology built on the premise of a Brute Fact universe is explained by Van Til. He writes:

Every one who reasons about facts comes to those facts with a schematism into which he fits the facts. The real question is, therefore, into whose schematism the facts will fit. . . . [U]nless we presuppose the existence of God, in whom, as the self-sufficient One, schematism and fact, fact and reason apart from and prior to the existence of the world, are coterminous, we find utterly unintelligible 'brute fact'.⁴⁵

Van Til argues that all philosophical theories are schematisms, or what I have called noetic structures. They are, among other things, attempts to put facts in order and show the meaningful relationships between them. But in the Brute Fact theory, there is not, nor can there be any such schematism. Brute Facts are discrete; there are no necessary relations between them. The fact two objects at time *T1* and place *P1* attract each other gravitationally is unrelated to two other objects which at time *T2* and place *P2* attract each other gravitationally. Based on brute fact these are simply two chance happenings. Thus, there can be no schematism, for there are no meaningful relations, merely chance events. Van Til states:

[A] philosophy of chance is the opposite of a philosophy of rationality. There can be causality and there can be no computation of statistical averages except in the presupposition of God as creator and Redeemer of the universe. The God of Christianity has a purpose with the universe; for that reason there is a purpose within the universe. A true immanentistic theology requires a transcendent teleology.⁴⁶

We then go to the 'facts', the phenomena of experience, and find again and again that if we seek to interpret any 'fact' on a non-Christian hypothesis it turns out to be a brute fact, and brute facts are unintelligible.⁴⁷

[Without God] the world of facts would be utterly discreet. There would be no laws at all.⁴⁸

In the Brute Fact Theory there can be no meaningful schematism, and therefore no schematism at all. Schematisms explain and predict what will happen in the

universe. It is assumed that water will flow down a hill because it is the nature of water and other material things to go downhill and due to gravity. However, in a brute fact world this event could not be explained by any law of gravity because there would be no such law; neither could it be said that if one sees a stream, it will go downhill. For the action of all things would merely be brute facts, and to be brute is to be without reason. This premise would destroy science, as science is based on the notion of the rationality and uniformity of nature. Science utilizes induction, and induction is, in this situation, what the Brute Fact theory undercuts. Science and common experience would be destroyed as there could be no generalizations, universalizations, or induction. The observation that all of the streams which were seen flowed downhill would have no relevance to the actions of the streams one had not observed.

Because of this, interpretation is destroyed. Knowledge involves interpretation and interpretation involves categorizing a particular kind of thing, e.g., 'The cat is black' means this particular entity, which is a cat, is also black. If facts only have a brute relation to one another, then they cannot be interpreted. Interpretation requires the placing of an individual thing into a part of the larger whole and this necessitates a meaningful relation between the individual and the whole and the objects which make up the whole. 'Brute Facts' are meaningless because none of them have any rational relation with anything else. No brute fact implies any other brute fact. The fact two or more objects have some properties in common does not imply they have other properties in common. If it is uncertain whether something has all the same properties of some similar thing, then it is impossible to determine if they belong in the same category. Thus, if a black cat were seen, one could not really put it in the same category as another black cat because, if one's knowledge were not exhaustive they could have all sorts of varying properties, e.g., one of the black cats may have been hatched from an egg. The similarities at some time of a certain object's properties, would, if everything were brute fact, explain nothing about the objects past or unobserved properties. Therefore, one could never have knowledge of unobserved properties and consequently the ability to classify things would be non-existent. And all of this would make predication impossible.

This brings us to our last problem. A necessary assumption about experience is that the future will be like the past. If the future is not like the past, then prediction and planning become impossible. Only by working from an ontology that has necessity built into it, can one coherently practice action which is based on past experience.⁴⁹ If the future bears no necessity to be like the past, then action based on past experience may be in vain. But according to the Brute Fact Theory, not only is there no necessity, there is no reason at all for thinking the future will be like the past. Since, in Brute Fact Theory, the universe has behaved the way it has for ultimately no reason at all, there is no reason to think it will behave the same way in the future. Everything that happens is a matter of chance. Therefore, if the universe continues to behave in the manner it always has, this is also ultimately a matter of chance, or, more accurately, since in the Brute Fact Theory all events and objects are discrete, it would be a matter of chance that all of the different objects

continue to behave in the same manner. If a die were rolled which was *known* to be fair (unweighted) one thousand times, and it always came up a six, this would still provide *no* reason to believe the next roll would also come up a six. If the objects in the universe have all acted in a certain way by chance for fifteen billion years or so, this would still, based on Brute Fact Theory, provide no reason to believe they would continue to behave that way in the future, and this is simply incredible.

In reality, no one actually believes the universe is completely chaotic, therefore it may seem as though I am attacking a fictitious position. If the universe were chaotic, then order, being and knowledge would be impossible. The real Brute Fact theorist believes that whatever law structure there is exists ultimately by chance, but as it does exist, there is order in that law structure. This, however, fails to take into consideration the real nature of the Brute Fact Theory. In this theory, it is not just the law structure as a whole which exists for no reason, it is also every concrete individual which exists. The Brute Fact Theory entails the lack of causally necessary lawfulness. The fact a group of discrete individuals all act in the same manner is merely a matter of chance. How, then, can there be any causal necessity or necessity in the lawfulness? The belief in the existence of causal necessity in the lawful behavior of discrete individuals is an entirely different concept than the Brute Fact Theory. As stated above, an ontology which rejects necessity and thereby undercuts induction, should itself be rejected.

Every philosophy must, as was shown above, have ultimates, those things to which everything else in the system is referred. In the Necessary Deity philosophy God is the ultimate being, the ultimate value and the ultimate source of authority, while in the Brute Fact Theory things are not as clear cut. For instance, the naturalistic version of the Brute Fact Theory (the theistic version has already been discussed enough) looks as though the ultimate being is matter. In naturalistic theory, matter, or physical things, exist uncaused, and is the 'stuff' out of which everything, or almost everything is composed (depending upon whether the theorist is a physicalist as well as a naturalist). In the Brute Fact Theory there are an infinite number of possible worlds, any one of which could have been the actual one. The fact this world is the actual one rather than any of the others is for no reason. Thus, in one sense, chance, pure possibility is ultimate in the Brute Fact theory. There is no factor which instantiates one possibility rather than another, no 'mechanism for creating order', it is merely chance or pure possibility. Thus, sheer possibility is ultimate, and from pure possibility there is no path to order and uniformity.

This finally leads us to the transcendental argument. Transcendental is that which is necessary a priori to any thought whatsoever. Thus, the basic laws of logic are transcendental because they must be assumed in order to think at all. As we have seen, the Brute Fact Theory is totally and utterly unable to justify order, being and especially knowledge. Indeed, knowledge of any kind is impossible in the Brute Fact Theory. Hence, in order for knowledge to be possible, to have any confidence whatsoever in one's thinking, the Brute Fact Theory must be presupposed as false. As the falsity of Brute Fact is a necessary a priori presupposition to any thought

whatsoever, the falsity of brute fact is actually a transcendental principle.

Further, this transcendental argument, even in this abductive form, avoids the weakness of the cosmological and teleological arguments. Those arguments depend upon knowledge of the universe, and this knowledge depends upon the validity of sense perception in order to gain knowledge of the universe. William Alston, for example, has recently shown the difficulty in justifying sense perception.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, it is obvious that our senses are valid and it is rational to trust them, indeed, it seems irrational not to. While I, and most other people, have no real doubt as to the general validity of sense perception, a skeptic might argue that if one cannot be sure of the nature of the universe, then the arguments to that extent are undercut.

Whatever the strength of this argument, it does not really touch the transcendental principle. For even if one's sense revealed nothing about the real nature of the universe, to have any valid thought at all, even to coherently question the validity of sense perception, one must presuppose the validity of the mind's operation. But, even this presupposes the Brute Fact Theory is false. For if one's thoughts are merely a disconnected series of brute facts, then no reason exists to think one can know the truth about anything, including that one's senses are delusory. Therefore, the transcendental argument is independent of the validity of sense perception, though the argument is more compelling if sense perception is valid.

Thus, we have seen that the Brute Fact Theory falls prey to the abductive teleological and cosmological arguments, and to the transcendental argument. It falls to the abductive teleological and cosmological arguments because the Brute Fact Theory makes predictions about what reality should be like, and it falls to the transcendental argument because its falsity must be presupposed in order for there to be any justification or validity in thought. In the Brute Fact Theory every particular event, every individual entity, is like a bead without a string, indeed, like a bead without a hole in it for the string.⁵¹ The universe then becomes a conglomeration of these beads, and just as beads without a string will not hold together, neither will a universe whose components are chance individuals with no necessary connection between them. As Van Til writes:

An illustration may indicate more clearly what is meant. Suppose we think of a man made of water in an infinitely extended and bottomless ocean of water. Desiring to get out of water, he makes a ladder of water. He sets this ladder upon the water and against the water and then attempts to climb out of the water. So hopeless and senseless a picture must be drawn of the natural man's methodology based as it is upon the assumption that time or chance is ultimate.⁵²

Because of this, Brute Theory must be deemed unacceptable. This leaves only two options, Necessary Deity and Necessary Universe. It is this latter option that we will now turn.

CHAPTER 9

NECESSARY UNIVERSE

Due to the problems with the Brute Fact theory, some may be tempted to embrace the Necessary Universe theory. Chapter Eight provided reasons for thinking the universe, the objects in it and the laws which govern the behavior of those objects, are logically contingent. But what if the contingency is only apparent? This alternate view will be the next topic. The Necessary Universe theory is more varied than the Brute Fact theory; there are several Necessary Universe theories. First, are naturalistic theories, theories in which the physical universe itself is a primary necessary being. These theories come in two forms, 'pure' naturalism which is represented by Objectivism, and 'impure' naturalism, represented by Milton Fisk. Second, are theories in which the universe is held to be a necessary product of abstract entities, such as ethical values, defended by John Leslie, or cosmological equations, defended by Quentin Smith. Third, are what might be called pantheistic theories wherein the universe is held to be an appearance of one being which exists necessarily. Fourth, are theories where the universe is held to be a necessary emanation of some other necessary being. This last theory will be examined in the next chapter.

Another distinction which must be made when discussing the Necessary Universe theory is between the weak and the strong version. In the weak version the laws of nature are necessary and could not be other than they are. In this theory there are other possible worlds, but if any of those worlds contain the kind of objects the actual world does, then necessarily they will behave according to the same laws. In the strong version of the theory this is the only possible world. The fact this world exists and behaves in the manner it does is because it could be no other way.

The first of the main theories to be examined will be the weak version of the naturalistic Necessary Universe theory. This version is defended by Objectivism, a philosophical movement based on the theories of Ayn Rand and her associates. The proponents of this viewpoint are defending an Aristotelian position. Aristotle believed that entities have natures and therefore, necessarily (in some sense) behave

in the manner they do. Contemporary defenders of a naturalistic Necessary Universe theory typically appeal to an ancient doctrine about natures.

Defenders of the weak naturalistic version of the Necessary Universe theory believe the universe exists of its own accord, and it cannot fail to exist or behave in a manner other than it does. To quote Ayn Rand:

To grasp the axiom that existence exists, means to grasp the fact that nature, i.e., the universe as a whole, cannot be created or annihilated, that it cannot come into or go out of existence. Whether its basic constituent elements are atoms, or subatomic particles, or some yet undiscovered forms of energy, it is not ruled by consciousness or will or by chance, but by the Law of Identity. All the countless forms, motions, combinations and dissolutions of elements within the universe—from a floating speck of dust to the formation of a galaxy to the emergence of life—are caused and determined by the identities of the elements involved. Nature is the *metaphysically given*—i.e., the nature of nature is outside the power of any volition.¹

The primary Objectivist axiom is that existence exists. Rand states:

The primacy of existence (of reality) is the axiom that existence exists, i.e., that the universe exists independent of consciousness (of *any* consciousness), that things are what they are, that they possess a specific nature, and *identity*. The epistemological corollary is the axiom that consciousness is the faculty of perceiving that which exists—and that man gains knowledge of reality by looking outward. The rejection of these axioms represents a reversal: the primary (sic) of consciousness—the notion that the universe has no independent existence, that it is the product of a consciousness (sic) (either human or divine or both).²

Rand is stating that the universe, the totality of concrete entities in space and time, is the metaphysical ultimate. It exists, according to Rand, independent of any consciousness, including that of God. However, the reason given for this contention is fallacious. Just because one realizes the universe is independent of one's own consciousness does not mean it is independent of anyone else's consciousness, especially God's. Rand is in fact mixing two different positions, one of which is the Kantian position which states it is human consciousness which structures the world. On this, Alvin Plantinga writes, "Second, there is what I shall call 'Enlightenment humanism'. . . 'Enlightenment subjectivism' or 'Enlightenment antirealism'. . . According to its central tenet, it is really we human beings, we men and women, who structure the world, who are responsible for its fundamental outline and lineaments—its fundamental structure and value."³

Plantinga compares and contrasts this view with two others, naturalism of which Objectivism is a variant, and theism. Rand is compressing two completely different positions, 'Enlightenment antirealism', and theism, and dismissing them with the same argument. The 'Enlightenment' anti-realist would charge Rand with question-begging, while the theist would claim misrepresentation. In theism, the universe exists objectively, independent of human consciousness, but depends upon God for

its existence and order. Rand is confusing the epistemic position that the external world is independent of our own consciousness, and the ontological position that the universe is independent and uncaused.

Rand and the Objectivists believe existence, which for them means the physical universe, is the only reality, and because of the law of identity, must act in accordance with its own nature. Leonard Peikoff provides the only systematic treatment defending this position. Like Willard Quine,⁴ he rejects the analytic-synthetic dichotomy, albeit for different reasons. He writes:

The view that facts are contingent—that the way things actually are is only one among a number of alternative possibilities, that things could have been different metaphysically—represents a failure to grasp the Law of Identity. Since things are what they are, since everything that exists possesses a specific identity, nothing in reality can occur causelessly or by chance. The nature of an entity determines what it can do and in any given set of circumstances, dictates what it *will* do. The Law of Causality is entailed by the Law of Identity. Entities follow certain laws of action in consequence of their identity, and have no alternative in doing so.⁵

Peikoff more recently stated, “‘Necessity’ in the present sense is not a datum over and above existents; it is an identification of existents from a special perspective. Necessity names existents considered as governed by the law of identity. ‘To be’, accordingly, ‘is to be necessary’.”⁶

The theory which results when this concept is combined with the statement that the universe cannot come into or go out of existence is a rejection of both theism and brute fact. Writes Peikoff:

Existence exists, and only existence exists. Existence is a primary: it is uncreated, indestructible, eternal. So if you are to postulate something beyond existence—some supernatural realm—you must do it by openly defying reason, dispensing with definitions, proofs, arguments, and saying flatly, ‘To hell with argument, I have faith’

Objectivism advocates reason as man’s sole means of knowledge, and therefore, for the reasons that I have already given, it is atheist. It denies any supernatural dimension presented as a contradiction of nature, of existence. This applies not only to God, but also to every other variant of the supernatural ever advocated or to be advocated. In other words, we accept reality, and that’s all.⁷

Some of the basic doctrines of Objectivism as stated in the above quotations are:

(9.1) Existence exists, and only existence exists.

(9.2) Existence is identical with the universe.

(9.3) Because everything that exists is part of the universe, there can be nothing external to it that could cause its existence.

(9.4) Every entity that exists within the universe has a nature.

(9.5) Because of the Law of Identity, every entity that exists must act in accordance with its nature. Thus, everything had to be the way that it is.

The first of several problems with the above doctrines is if (9.1) isn't intended as an empty tautology, then the concept of existence must be given meaning. While this is done in (9.2), another problem arises. The manner in which the Objectivists use the term universe clearly means the physical universe, which as defined above excludes God. This argument is circular. If the physical universe or nature is defined as existence, then by definition, anything apart from nature, that is, the universe, is non-existent. This is question begging. Obviously, if one defines the physical universe as existence, then anything not part of the physical universe becomes, by definition, non-existent. One could just as easily define existence as something which is identical with liquid, and thus prove that solids and gases can't exist. Yet on the other hand, if the universe and existence are not defined in this question-begging way there is no reason a priori to exclude God. If the universe is merely another term for anything which exists, then if God exists, he would merely be part of the universe. Hence, the Objectivist's argument is either question-begging or totally useless as justification for the non-existence of God.

This definition of the term universe also leads to the problem with (9.3). Obviously, if everything which exists is part of the physical universe, there can be nothing outside of it to cause its existence. But if there is nothing outside of the physical universe, then God could not exist anyway. On the other hand, defining the universe as equivalent to whatever exists says nothing about whether the physical universe is dependent upon God. For in this case, one part of the 'universe', the physical universe, would depend for its existence upon another part of the 'universe', God. So (9.3) either says nothing interesting, or is being used in a question-begging manner to abolish God. As stated above, the problems with the aforementioned doctrines all stem from defining 'existence' as being identical with 'universe', and then defining 'universe' as being identical with the physical universe.

(9.4) and (9.5) claim that everything which exists has a nature, and that entities necessarily behave in accordance to their natures. This is a determinism which leaves no logical possibility of something else happening. To summarize how Objectivist's view the universe I quote from Peikoff, "Is the universe then unlimited in size? No. Everything which exists is finite, including the universe. What then, you ask, is outside the universe if it is finite? This question is invalid."⁸

Therefore according to Objectivism, existence is the physical universe, finite in size, but not in time. It is uncreated and indestructible. All of the entities that exist within it act in accordance with their nature, because of the Law of Identity, in a totally deterministic manner. For them to do otherwise is a logical impossibility. There is, and can be, nothing outside of the physical universe.

Why then do I say Objectivism represents the weaker version of the Necessary

Universe theory? The first of two reasons is that although the behavior of the universe and everything in it are necessary given their history (and due to the fact that the physical 'stuff' out of which everything is made can not be created or destroyed), it seems logically possible that the whole history of the universe could have been different. Different objects or even different matter could have existed which would have acted in accordance with their own nature's for an infinite amount of time. The laws of the universe would have been the same, but the entities of which it is composed would have been different. Or there could have been the same entities, but they could have had different positions throughout the entire infinite history. Or there could have been some combination of the above.

My second reason for stating Objectivism represents the weaker version of the Necessary Universe theory is that the Objectivists endorse an incompatibilist version of free will. The incompatibilist, or libertarian concept of the will is indeterministic. In this account the universe could have been different if the persons in it had made different choices in the same circumstances. On this subject Nathaniel Branden writes:

That which man does, declare the advocates of determinism, he *had* to do-that which he believes, he *had* to believe-if he focuses his mind, he *had* to-if he evades the effort of focusing, he *had* to-if he is guided solely by reason, he *had* to be-if he is ruled instead by feeling or whim, he *had* to be-*he couldn't help it*. But if this were true, no *knowledge* would be possible to man. No theory could claim greater plausibility than any other-including the theory of psychological determinism.⁹

Thus, Objectivism rejects determinism for human beings, and the universe could have been other than it is. This is therefore the weaker version of the Necessary Universe theory.

The Objectivists believe all, or almost all of that which occurs is necessary and that all the claims of contingency made by other thinkers about the universe and the entities within it are based on a failure to understand reality. They offer a theory of *necessary natures* which basically states that which an entity is, necessarily determines how it will always behave. If they are correct, then both the Brute Fact theory and the Necessary Deity theory collapse. On the other hand, if they are wrong, then Objectivism itself is destroyed for it is based on the metaphysical principle of existents whose actions are determined by their own natures. The only systematic exposition of their theory is provided by Leonard Peikoff. Peikoff starts off by defining the analytic-synthetic dichotomy, contrasting different propositions like, man being a rational animal as opposed to man having two eyes, and ice being solid and ice floating on water. He goes on to say, "The *first* proposition in each of these pairs, it is said, can be validated *merely by an analysis of the meaning of its constituent concepts* (thus, these are called 'analytic' truths), . . . A 'synthetic' proposition is defined as one which *cannot* be validated merely by an analysis of the meanings or definitions of its constituent concepts."¹⁰

This distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions is the one customarily

given. The truth of analytic propositions can easily be seen by their definitions, for their denials are self-contradictory, while additional information is needed to determine the truth of synthetic propositions. To quote Peikoff on synthetic propositions, "To deny such truths is to maintain a *falsehood*, but not a *self-contradiction*."¹¹ As this stance leaves out the possibility of there being synthetic necessities Peikoff states, "Analytic truths are *necessary*; no matter what region of space or what period of time one considers, such propositions *must* hold true."¹² On the other hand, "Synthetic truths, however are declared *not* to be necessary; they are called '*contingent*'. This means: . . . such propositions *happen to be* true-but they do not *have to be* true."¹³

Not everyone would agree with this.¹⁴ In the first chapter of this book I defined analytic and synthetic necessities differently. For example the proposition 'nothing can be colored red and colored green at the same time' is certainly a necessary truth, yet this is not known simply from the definitions of 'thing', 'red' and 'green'.

Peikoff goes on to list other differences between analytic and synthetic propositions such as, analytic propositions are verifiably independent of sense experience, while synthetic truths are dependent upon our experience of them for verification, and analytic propositions do not tell anything about external reality, while synthetic propositions do.¹⁵ Having listed the differences between analytic and synthetic propositions, Peikoff begins his critique by roundly declaring, "Objectivism rejects the theory of the analytic-synthetic dichotomy as false--in principle, at root and in every one of its variants."¹⁶ He then begins to zero in on the concept of the analytic proposition as he asks, "The critical question is: *What is included in 'the meaning of a concept'?* Does a concept mean the *existents* which it subsumes, including *all* their characteristics? Or does it mean only certain aspects of these existents, . . . ?"¹⁷ Peikoff then notes it is the latter which underlies the analytic-synthetic dichotomy and after this he introduces the Objectivist theory of concepts.

Objectivists believe a concept is formed when one isolates, on the basis of perception, the similarities of a group of things that other beings do not share, and integrates them into a new concept via the process of omitting particular measurements of the relevant similarities.¹⁸

A concept therefore consists of, ". . . *the units-the existents-which it integrates, including all the characteristics of these units*."¹⁹ For Objectivists, "concepts mean *existents*, not arbitrarily selected portions of existents."²⁰ This means that all of an existents properties are part of its concept. Peikoff writes, "*Metaphysically*, an entity is: all of the things which it is. Each of the characteristics has the same metaphysical status: . . ."²¹ Peikoff then writes one cannot legitimately distinguish analytic from synthetic propositions because all the properties of a thing are included in its concept, and thus are based on the laws of Identity and Contradiction.²²

Peikoff goes on to emphasize that this analysis applies to every statement and every object. Every object is composed of all the characteristics it possesses, and therefore it cannot lack any of the properties it does have and still be the kind of

thing it is. Peikoff asserts, "If one wishes to use the term 'tautology' in this context, then *all* truths are 'tautological'."²³ Because of this, Peikoff writes:

In one sense, *no* truths are 'analytic'. No proposition can be validated merely by 'conceptual analysis'; the content of the concept-i.e., the characteristics of the existents it integrates-must be discovered and validated by observation, before any analysis is possible. In another sense, *all* truths are 'analytic'. When some characteristics of an entity has been discovered, the propositions ascribing it to the entity will be seen to be 'logically true'...²⁴

Moving on to the issues of contingency and necessity, Peikoff writes that in the time before Kant it was common to appeal to 'intellectual intuition' as a means to determine if a certain fact was necessary. This stance is based on the belief human beings have a strange and inexplicable capacity to grasp necessities, things that had to be.²⁵ I argue the basis for believing some facts are necessary and some are contingent is not so much intuition, but rather the law of contradiction. The statement all cubes have 12 edges is a necessary truth because any attempt to describe a cube with a different number of edges will generate a contradiction at some point, although the way this is realized is often through intuition rather than actual demonstration. The fact a particular cube is red is contingent, as a cube can be constructed in a different color, but a cube with 137 sides is inconceivable. As far as intellectual intuition is concerned, it is a fact human beings have the ability to recognize modal truth. A theist has no problem ascribing this ability to human beings for they believe God created human beings with the ability to recognize necessity and contingency.²⁶

After making the statement there is no contingency and everything happens necessarily because of the Law of Identity, Peikoff goes on to say that because all of the facts of an entity are inherent in that entity, all facts are necessary. Thus the concept of necessity is superfluous.²⁷ Furthermore, "The fundamental error in all such doctrines is the failure to grasp that *existence is a self-sufficient primary*."²⁸

The above quote is ambiguous because the word 'existence', when used in the type of statements made by Peikoff, can mean two different things. 'Existence' can either mean everything which exists or it can be used as a description (*A-existence*) differentiating between instantiated and uninstantiated things, such as Bill Clinton and Batman. If when Peikoff said existence is a self-sufficient primary he means 'existence' (which for him is the physical universe) is everything which exists, then he is involved in question-begging.

If 'existence' is used as a description, then Peikoff is still engaged in question-begging. It is unquestionably true that if the alternative to existence is non-existence, and non-existence is nothing, then the alternative to existence is nothing. However, this argument is dependent upon an ambiguity in the word 'nothing'. There is a difference in stating the alternative to existence is nothing and the alternative to existence is non-existence. The first statement implies there is *no* alternative to existence, while the second means the alternative to existence is to not

exist. Peikoff's argument depends upon the first interpretation, but the fact that the alternative to existence is non-existence does not entail the first alternative—that there is no alternative to existence. The mere fact certain things, or even the physical universe as a whole exists, does not in itself imply that 'existence' cannot cease to exist, nor that it or they had to exist, nor that some of the things in existence are not dependent for their existence upon other things which exist.

Even if it is accepted that there is nothing apart from or antecedent to existence, this hardly implies God does not exist—since if he exists he is one of the existents. If Peikoff means by existence physical existence, then he is question-begging, for it is not self-evident that existence is necessarily physical. He offers no defense of this thesis save that non-physical things have no identity and are unknowable. But no reason is given to explain why non-physical or supernatural entities cannot have an identity. It is part of God's identity to be sovereign, omniscient, omnipotent, etc. And if non-physical entities can have an identity, then there is no reason why they cannot be known.

In summary, Peikoff thinks a violation of the laws of nature would entail a contradiction. He writes, "[A]s we have seen, the laws of nature are inherent in the identities of the entities that exist."²⁹

I don't deny there are some good things in the position Peikoff outlines. He has some cogent criticisms of the Brute Fact theory and I agree with him in criticizing those who believe the concept of necessity is useless in determining anything about the nature of reality. Nevertheless, his position is false.

The basic Objectivist argument is this:

(9.6) Every entity which exists has a specific nature.

(9.7) An entity's nature consists of all the properties the entity has. Thus, if the entity is of type *G*, then as part of its nature it will have properties *a*, *b*, *c*, . . . *n*. Collectively, these properties make up the entity's nature.

(9.8) If an entity *F* fails to possess one of the properties that entities of type *G* have, say *c*, then it will fail to be a *G*.

(9.9) Therefore, it is logically necessary that for an entity *F* to be a *G*, it have all the requisite properties.

(9.10) Therefore, if *F* is a *G*, it is logically necessary that it have all the properties that an entity of type *G* must have, i.e., *a*, *b*, *c*, . . . *n*.

(9.11) Therefore, it is logically impossible for *F* to fail to possess any of these properties.

(9.12) Therefore, all entities act out of logical necessity in everything they do, because of the natures they possess.

The statement that in order for an entity to have a nature it must have all of the

properties entities of that type possess is arguable. If an entity, say a proton, changed its strong nuclear force by $\frac{1}{2}$ of one percent and remained the same in all other respects, it would still be a proton. But in the Objectivist theory, a proton which deviated in this manner would not be a proton. Again, in the Objectivist theory, a nature is *all* of the properties which an entity possesses. This means if I had one less cell in my body than I currently have, I would be a different person and the human race would be a different species. In this situation there would have been a different set of properties in the human race, and again as Peikoff argued, Objectivists believe *all* of an entities or types properties are necessary to the concept of that entity or type. This seems absurd, but is entailed by Peikoff's statement. This position is similar to David Lewis's counterpart theory and is subject to some of the same difficulties.³⁰

The move from (9.10) to (9.11) is a classic case of the De Dicto-De Re fallacy. If type *G* entities are defined as having properties *a, b, c, . . . n*, then necessarily, anything which fails to behave in the manner prescribed by the definition will fail to be a *G*. However, this does not mean that entity *F*, which is purportedly a *G* but fails somehow to behave in the manner prescribed by *a, b, c, . . . n*, is somehow breaking the Law of Identity. It just means that *F* is not really a *G*. Suppose entity *F*, who was purportedly a *G*, at some time *T*, began behaving for a short time in manner *c'* instead of behaving in manner *c*. According to Objectivist theory this is logically impossible as it breaks the Law of Identity. In my opinion all this shows is that *F*, instead of being a *G*, is really a *G'*, which is another type of entity. If a man is a 'sitting man', he obviously cannot get up and remain a sitting man. But this hardly means that sitting men can never stand up. The objection that 'man' is a type while 'sitting man' isn't begs the question. Why can't an entity be of one type at one time and another type at another time? The only answer Objectivists have is if an entity fails to follow the rigid definition for some type, then the entity is not of that type.

For the Objectivists, the nature of some type *G* is exhaustively exemplified in the manners in which all entities of type *G* exist and behave. According to them, their natures can only be discovered empirically and therefore, the basic unit is the individual entity. If some entity *F* really is of type *G* it will only act in a manner consistent with being a *G*. If some entity thought to be an *F* acts inconsistently with what was thought to be proper type *G* behavior, then the Objectivist has a dilemma. He can either change the definition of what it means to be a *G*, or he can decide *F* is not a *G*. For example, if some cat starts chasing cars and barking, then one could either redefine what it means to be a cat, or decide this individual is really not a cat. The Objectivist theory is no help in this situation, as all an Objectivist could say is, if this cat were a 'real' cat, it would not behave in such a manner. But the question remains; why is this cat a real cat rather than another kind of cat? For each individual entity, there is no such thing as a 'nature' apart from the properties the entity has. This being the case, the entity is prevented from behaving in a certain manner by the laws of logic if and only if behaving in that manner would contradict one of the other properties the entity has, e.g., if something tried to be solid and

liquid at the same time and in the same manner.

Let us imagine there are protons and protons'. Protons' are just like protons except they have a strong nuclear force 1% greater than that of protons. This seems to be possible as there is no contradiction generated by the concept of a proton'. The question now is, why couldn't some particular protons, say *P*, switch from being a proton to being a proton' for no reason at all, that is, as a brute fact? There seems to be nothing in the physical nature of *P* in particular or protons in general to prevent this change. The nature of protons is simply the sum of all the physical properties protons possess; there is no necessity in maintaining a particular proton must stay a proton. So, if there is to be ontological stability, if individual protons like *P* are not to switch from being protons to being protons', then there must be some other property which would prevent this. Obviously, this could not be a physical property. It would have to be an abstract property similar to, 'Necessarily, a proton cannot change to being a proton', without a cause'. If this proposition is a property of protons, then it cannot be false, for by definition it is necessarily true. But necessary truths must have contradictions entailed by their denials. And there seems to be no contradiction generated by denying that 'Necessarily, protons cannot switch into protons' without a cause'. Thus, this statement is necessarily false and there is no internal reason why a proton could not switch to being a proton' for no reason. This analysis could be carried out with many different properties in many different objects. Thus, within physical, concrete objects there is no basis for ontological stability.

There are two other points to consider. First, we have seen that there could be proton like entities (PLE) which are very similar to, but significantly different from, protons in some respects. For example, there could be entities which are just like protons except their strong nuclear force is 1/4 of 1% stronger. And of course, there are a lot of other examples, with different properties at different strengths. As long as there is no internal inconsistency, these hypotheticals are all logically possible. PLE could exist whose property strength fluctuated, e.g., from 1/4 of 1% stronger than normal to 1/2 of 1% stronger and back again every second. Or there could be PLE which had normal strength until the year 2000 at which time they would change to 1/2 of 1% stronger. The possibilities are virtually endless.

Objectivists believe all properties are *E-properties*, that is, an object will have the same properties in all of the worlds in which it exists.³¹ As indicated above, this will be called the *necessary nature* view. If any PLE actually existed, their nature would be as necessary to them as the proton's nature is to protons according to the necessary nature view. According to the Objectivists, the natures of entities can only be discovered by empirical examination, therefore, if consistent, the existence of PLE is as possible as the existence of protons. Indeed, protons would only be one of a huge, infinite number of PLE. So why is it that only protons exist? Based on the grounds of logical possibility, all objects have an equal chance of existing. Yet the only PLE which are seen are protons. The Objectivist theory entails that PLE are all one kind for no reason. As entities which are discrete, the PLE have no necessary relationship to one another. The fact they are all the same kind of PLE

is strictly a matter of chance-which from a logical point of view is infinitely improbable.

Second, there could be PLE which have all the properties of protons until the year 2,000 A.D., at which time their properties would change to those possessed by electrons.³² At the present time they would be indistinguishable from protons. Again, there are a vast number of such possible PLE, e.g., one changes *C1* at time *T1*, one changes *C2* at time *T2*, etc. All are consistent with the present data, and empirically there is no reason to think the PLE will remain unchanged instead of mutable. According to the Objectivist theory, the nature of things can only be determined through observation, a priori there is no reason to prefer proton stability to proton instability. In this case, induction becomes worthless. The chances of the future being like the past are extremely small, for the possibility of change is far greater than the possibility of stability-which is absurd. Yet in both of the above arguments entities necessarily act according to their natures. Peikoff doesn't provide any reason to think ontological stability can be based on the natures of entities which are necessary. Even if the natures of entities are necessary, this does not explain why the universe is stable. The necessary nature view provides no reason why all entities of one type should always be the same, why all PLE should have the same properties or why the properties of entities should not vary over time and space.

The Objectivists need to show the entailed logical contradiction in some property *c* having a strength which is different than its normal strength. That is to say, if the strong nuclear force of a proton was *c'* instead of *c*, this would entail an inconsistency with the rest of the properties which protons have. This seems impossible, in fact, all of the arguments in the previous chapter could be used against this concept. It is inconsistent for a triangle not have three sides, however it is not inconsistent for there to be an object like a proton whose only difference is it has a strong nuclear force 1/4 of one percent more or less than a normal proton. The Objectivists need to be able to show this kind of variance is inconsistent for every property of every entity. And this is impossible. As the Objectivists hope to establish ontological stability with the necessary nature theory, this failure is important. The necessary nature theory, as previously demonstrated, does not provide any reason why the universe is not chaotic. Furthermore, it relies on a De Dicto-De Re fallacy that if something has a nature, then it cannot have a different nature on pain of logical contradiction. Hence, there is no support in this concept for the Necessary Universe theorist.

The same argument kind of arguments can be made for the existence of entities over time. A proton necessarily has a certain nature and therefore it has the properties it has necessarily, yet it is not the nature of a proton to exist necessarily. There are a finite number of protons in existence (Peikoff must admit this). Let us call this finite number *N*. But it is not necessarily true that there are the number there are. For according to Objectivism, the necessity of the proton lies in the nature of the proton, and the nature of the proton does not say how many must exist. That is, based on the nature of protons one might be able to deduce the strength of

its strong nuclear force, but one cannot deduce that any exist. This being the case, it is a brute fact that there are N protons in existence. And as this is a brute fact, there might have been some other number of protons in existence, or none at all. As protons did not have to exist, and in fact can be transmuted into other things, protons do not have necessary existence. Thus, the fact a proton exists simpliciter is a contingent fact.

The same problem arises when it is stated that it is not the proton, but the matter of which it is made that is necessary. If there is such stuff as this matter, it can take on many different natures, e.g., protons, electrons, photons, etc. As all of these are contingent, it is hard to see why any of their natures can confer necessary existence on the matter. If, on the other hand, it is the matter itself which exists necessarily, then there is necessarily the amount of matter in the universe that there is, and if this matter exists necessarily, it could not have been otherwise. But there is no contradiction entailed in conceiving of a different amount of matter. The problem lingers with the statement that even though a lump of matter did not have to exist, once it did, it must remain in existence. Why is any particular lump of matter necessarily existent? Why, logically, must it remain in existence? Again, there is no contradiction in thinking it could cease to exist. If this is true, then Objectivism cannot provide an answer to why the universe is ontologically orderly. Objectivists have not escaped from brute fact.

Milton Fisk is another philosopher who embraces a necessary nature theory. He defends the view, "[T]here are compelling reasons for recognizing that there are objectively based physical necessities."³³ From this he adds, "The ontology called for by objectively based necessity will then be a rich one indeed. In it there will be natures, and not just properties had either by nature or accidentally."³⁴ For Fisk, the essential point is that there are physical necessities which are distinct from logical necessities. He writes, "[T]here are two sets of necessities. It in no way follows that the necessity itself-the modality-of a physical necessity differs from that of a logical truth."³⁵ Fisk also writes, "The proposition that this gas expands when heated under constant pressure is not a logical necessity, though the proposition that this gas expands is a logical necessity."³⁶ Thus even though distinct, in the final analysis physical necessity is the same thing as logical necessity, that is, true in all possible worlds.

To support the above assertions, Fisk adds two more premises. "The first premise is that logical truths unlike physical truths have contradictory denials; the second is that having a contradictory denial is their necessity."³⁷ Based on this it can be said that despite their similarity, physical and logical necessity have different bases. The necessities are necessary in logical necessity because to deny them entails an impossibility. Why then are physical necessities necessary? Fisk begins his answer with what he calls the *univocity thesis* which states that logical and physical necessity are based on the nature of the entities involved. He writes, "That Jones does not both have and lack a nose may be necessary for the reason that it is Jones' nature not to have and lack the same part."³⁸ Again, the concept of nature becomes key as it connects the laws of nature with the entities and supplies the needed

necessity. Also, “[I]t is not enough to say that natures do not have lawful connections, but merely stand behind such connections. They must also inhere in individuals or things as their ‘being’ or ‘substance’.”³⁹

Natures, according to Fisk, cannot be properly thought of as being properties or parts of an individual.⁴⁰ Rather, they are the basis for the properties or parts of the individual entities. But what are they, if they are the basis for the properties, parts and behavior of entities, yet are themselves none of the above? Fisk believes this question should be answered in terms of the natures of entities, rather than in terms of types of being. Fisk states:

How then are we to express an interpretation of ‘by nature’ in terms of entities rather than of manners of being? As a first step, consider an interpretation of ‘ a is ϕ by nature’ as ‘The nature of a is such that a is ϕ ’. But this does not unequivocally commit us to natures as entities. For, if we treat ‘the nature of a is such that’ as an operator on a par with ‘some x is such that’, then everything but ‘ a ’ in the operator might be relegated to the syncategorematic. I am then led to propose that ‘ a is ϕ by nature’ be interpreted as ‘There is a nature such that a has it and if a has it then a is ϕ ’.⁴¹

This leads to the final formulation, which is where there is a variable for natures:

(9.13) A by the nature of certain entities if and only if there are natures that those entities have and A is implied by the fact that they have those natures.⁴²

Fisk goes on to argue that his formulation does not fall into an infinite regress by summing up, “Our position is that whatever a has necessarily it has it because of its nature. So if a has N necessarily, this is simply because of N itself, and the regress to other entities is stopped.”⁴³ And, “So nature grounds necessity and lawfulness in the existence of natures and of their implications are conditions for the truth of claims of necessity and lawfulness.”⁴⁴ In conclusion Fisk defends the position that entities have natures and these natures necessarily entail what properties the entities have. Natures are not properties or parts of entities, but rather things which stand in a special relation to the entities so that the entities, if they possess some nature, will necessarily have certain properties.

While Fisk works through this premise in great detail, the nagging question remains: Why do entities have the properties they do necessarily? Fisk’s answer is because the nature they possess is not adequate. Several issues must be clarified before this answer can be accepted. First, what exactly is a nature? It cannot merely be the sum of all the properties of some kind of entity, as is the case in the Objectivist theory, for Fisk disallows this. Further, as demonstrated above, this option would not provide any necessity. Is it then some kind of abstract entity? If so, Fisk does not make this clear, and the problem of the relation between the abstract entity and the physical entities, etc. would then arise. These are crucial points, yet Fisk does not elaborate on them. In order for Fisk’s theory to be clear these points must be explained, hence his theory of natures remains mysterious.

Second, 'natures' can not solve the problem of why entities necessarily behave in a certain manner. Suppose there is some entity F which has a nature of kind G . Now suppose that in the actual world, W , some other kind of entity, say H does not exist. But there is another possible world, W' , where F and entities of kind H exist and interact with entities of kind G . In W' the interaction of a G with a H has a certain result R . However, there is another kind of entity in W' , G' . G' is exactly like G except that in interacting with entities of kind H , it has result R' , instead of R . With the exception of the additional laws governing H 's and G 's, the laws governing W and W' are the same. Now since F exists in W , it is considered a G . But consider the question, if W' had been the actual world, what would F be; a G or a G' ? The answer of course could be either, but this in itself is a problem. If F has all the properties it has in W , does it also have the property that would make it a G or a G' ? If no, then having all the properties of an F does not mean that an F has a nature which necessarily gives it all of its properties. For W' could have been the actual world, and if it had been, then F would either have been a G or a G' . And if F does not have as part of its nature all of its properties, then its nature and the properties it has are not necessary, contrary to Fisk's argument.

On the other hand, if F is a G in W , then it has properties which are never exemplified. But if this is true, then F 's or any entity's properties are latent; they somehow exist but are never exemplified. Let us introduce one last entity, F' , which is just like F except that it is a G' rather than a G . If F or F' exist as G and G' respectively in W , then they have different natures, although to all observers in W , they would appear indistinguishable. But if the natures of each cannot be part of either F or F' , then they must be distinct from each entity, and so a nature cannot be physical in nature. F and F' are physically indistinguishable in W because the nature of a physical object is not part of the object, and thus cannot be physical in itself. For if natures were themselves physical entities, they would be like the physical entities whose natures they are supposed to be. Besides other absurdities, how could the nature of cats, for example, be some physical entity which is different than any existing cat? A nature is something which enters into the very constitution of all of the beings it is a part of, and therefore must be non-physical.

But if natures are non-physical, what are they and how are they different in F and F' ? To be the nature of different physical objects, a nature must either be an abstraction or an abstract entity of some sort. The first possibility is a nominalist theory, while the second is a realist theory. If one takes the nominalist path and decides natures are mere abstractions of the actually existing entities, then the abstractions have no independent existence and therefore cannot be the cause of natures. On the other hand, if one takes the realist approach and decides natures are abstract entities, then how do these abstract entities relate to the physical entities? There seems to be no way in which a particular nature, say a G , is necessarily related to some particular physical entity. According to Fisk, if some particular entity has a nature, then that entity necessarily acts in a certain way. But how does an abstract entity act on a physical entity to cause it to necessarily behave in a certain manner? Abstract entities are entities that, if they exist at all, may only act

in a necessary manner. How then do they act on the particular, contingently existing entities whose nature they are supposed to be, as there is no connecting link between the abstraction and the particular entities? How does the abstract, necessary entity act in a particular manner, so that F , a particular individual in a certain place and time, necessarily behaves in some way? If, on the other hand, the nature is not thought of as an abstract entity, but merely as an idealization of what the entity is, it becomes even harder to understand how such an empty concept could cause entities to necessarily behave in a certain manner.

There is also the problem that in W , F and F' are identical. How can the natures differentiate so that one entity has one nature and the other entity has the other nature? By stipulation, in W , F and F' are identical, so why is one nature the nature of G while the other is the nature of G' ? How, to ask an absurd question, do the natures know which of the two entities they are the nature of? It cannot be because of any difference within the two entities since in W they are identical. As there is no difference in the entities there is no way they could be under the control of different natures. To put it another way, if G is supposed to be the nature of one kind of entity and G' the nature of another kind of entity, then there must be some kind of difference in the entities. Yet if there is no difference between the different entities except for the fact they have different natures, the whole scenario becomes viciously circular. There is no way that two entities which were identical in some world could *necessarily* have different natures which would be exemplified in some other world.

According to Fisk, an entity's nature is necessary, and this presents another problem. It is impossible for an individual of some nature to behave in a manner which is not in, or violates its nature. But this raises the question: If in W F has the nature of a G , while in W F' has the nature of a G' , yet both are identical, how can it be a contradiction that either F is a G' or F' is a G ? If F and F' are identical in W and their nature is partly composed of their properties, then it can't be contradictory to their natures for either of them to be either kind of nature. As F and F' are identical in W and by stipulation one is of one kind of nature in W' while the other is of another kind of nature, there is thus no contradiction between having the kind of properties both have in W and being either G or G' . There can be no contradiction for either of them to have either nature, and thus no contradiction for either F or F' to have a different nature than either actually has. On the other hand, if a nature is considered as a whole rather than the properties it has in W , then there is no reason why any entity could not have different natures in different possible worlds. As in this view a nature is not partly composed of the properties it has in the actual world, there is no problem with that entity having any set of properties and yet having the same nature. In other words, the nature becomes disconnected from the actual properties the entity has. But if this is the case, then the nature has no connection with the entity, for the entity itself has nothing over and above the properties it has. Again, one is left with the mysterious view that entities have natures which totally control them, and yet are not part of them.

The only way to avoid the above problem is to deny the possibility of the

existence of identical entities in the actual world with different natures which could be expressed in some other world. This brings us to the final problem with Fisk's argument, that of contradiction. He writes:

Granting that logical truths have contradictory denials, can we safely assert that saying that they are necessary amounts to no more than saying that they have contradictory denials? If so, then saying that a contradiction cannot be true is merely saying that a contradiction is a contradiction. But this is manifestly not the case. A contradiction affirms and denies the same thing, and it is an important, even if familiar fact, that such a claim cannot be true. So its impossibility does not consist in its being contradictory.

Physical and logical necessity are distinguished not by distinguishing two species of necessity but by distinguishing the physical from the logical truths to which the necessity applies.⁴⁵

Commenting on the aforementioned example of Jones and his nose, Fisk states, "A logical truth would not then be necessary because its denial is contradictory or because its truth is invariant under changes in non-logical content. Rather, the logical truth would be necessary because it is the nature of the entities covered by the truth to support truths of that sort."⁴⁶ In other words, Jones cannot both have and not have a nose just because such a state is contradictory, it is so primarily because it is the kind of nature of such an entity as Jones not to both have and not have a nose.

Unfortunately, this doesn't really solve anything. For any kind of entity, real or possible, with any possible attribute, cannot both have and not have the attribute in the same sense at the same time. Thus, it would be the nature of everything possible to have that kind of nature. But why? The classic answer is the laws of identity and contradiction prevent Jones from both having and not having a nose; and the same holds true with everything else. Fisk argues above that one cannot suppose something is necessary because its denial is contradictory, for this would be saying a contradiction is impossible because it is a contradiction. But the real reason that contradiction does not work is that it is impossible for there to be a contradiction. In the case of Jones and his nose, for example, it is impossible for Jones to both have and not have a nose because to assert both is to say nothing about Jones. Basically, nothing determinate is being said about Jones and one would not know anything more about him than before the statement was made.

As Fisk admits, "[L]ogical truths unlike physical truths have contradictory denials."⁴⁷ Thus, physical necessities are not logical necessities for one can coherently conceive of their denials. If, for example, the statement is made that it is the nature of cats not to bark or chase cars and this fact is a physical necessity, then it would not be contradictory to image a cat who did both of these activities. There would be nothing contradictory to the notion of a cat running after every moving car it sees. If cats are defined as non-car chasers, then any 'cat' who did so would not be a cat. This is basically a restatement of the Objectivist fallacy

examined and refuted in the last section. Again, where would the necessity come from? In the case of logical necessities, the necessity is in the meaninglessness of the denial, however this premise is not available in the case of physical necessity. There is no De Re contradiction in the concept of car-chasing cats, or protons with the strong nuclear force $1/4$ greater than normal, etc. And if there is no contradiction, then there is no reason why the denial of the nature could not happen in some world. After all, Fisk states that both logical and physical necessities are true in all possible worlds.⁴⁸ But unlike logical necessities there is no impossibility in the denial of a physical 'necessity', or nature, so no reason exists for the necessity of the natures. The denials are possible, and therefore there are worlds in which they are true.

I can find no argument provided by Fisk for the necessity of physical natures, save that the universe would be chaotic with out them. This, however overlooks the alternative of theism. Theism provides for stable natures which are not logically necessary. God could will them to be stable, and as God's will is free, he could will different stabilities in different worlds. The only way Fisk could save his theory is to show there is a non-logical necessity which is true in every possible world. But this is impossible, for by definition, logical possibility is the basis of possible worlds. Only by converting physical necessity into logical necessity could the theory be saved, yet this is futile for logical necessity is so because of the impossibility and meaninglessness of the denials. Thus, Fisk's theory fails.

As a naturalist version of the Necessary Universe theory fails, one might be tempted to select some other version of the theory. In fact Fisk, by making necessity dependent upon 'natures', has taken a step in this direction. One major problem with naturalist versions of the Necessary Universe theory is that, by definition, the necessity must come from the physical objects themselves; it cannot lie in some deeper set of objects like God or abstract entities.

In John Leslie's ontology we see a move away from naturalism.⁴⁹ Leslie defends a theory he entitles *Extreme Axiarchism*; in this theory the reason the universe exists is because of *Ethical Requiredness*. In brief, there are objective values in existence and these values have creative abilities. They cause either the universe to exist, or God as a person to exist, who then causes the universe to exist. Leslie prefers the first option, but is open to the second. Thus, in answer to the question of why the universe exists, or why any particular part of the universe exists, the reason is that it is ethically required to do so. It is to this theory that our attention must turn.

Leslie's first task is to defend the objectivity of ethical values. These values, he argues, exist and are independent of anyone, even God. He writes, "As with mathematical, so with ethical realities. *A world of such and such a kind would be good, there always being a need for a good world.* This would remain a reality even were there nobody and nothing to give actually existing padding to it. Now such realities, unconditionally real and important, might be at creation's basis."⁵⁰

Many would quarrel with Leslie's defense of the objectivity of ethical values, but I do not. I will briefly make the point that if there are objective ethical values, then it is hard to see how they could be the cause of God's existing, as Leslie mentions

in his second option, rather than the other way around. For ethical values, by their very nature, exist necessarily, and are necessarily the values of persons. If this is true, then they must be grounded in a necessary person rather than being the cause of a necessary person. Leslie's response to this is he can think of no other way for God to exist necessarily, if he does exist, than to be caused by these necessarily existing ethical values. But as discussed in chapter four, there is an alternate way for God to exist, and therefore Leslie's response fails.

All this aside, Leslie now moves on to the next stage in his argument, the problem of creative power. It seems counter-intuitive that abstract entities like ethical values could create concrete objects, thus Leslie's defense of this notion requires investigation. Leslie writes, "Creation, says the extreme axiarchist, is the work of an Ethical Requirement which results when many lesser values come together compatibly. He can find no hard evidence for this since all ethical requirements are beyond empirical proof."⁵¹ Even though Leslie thinks the theory is beyond proof, he argues it can be rationally supported, "The ethical necessity for there to be good existents is, in short, independent of whether there actually are any."⁵² However, "The extreme axiarchist does not hold that there actually was a situation including no existents; for had ethical requirements ever been creative failures, how could they suddenly ceased to fail?"⁵³ As ethical values are eternal, and indeed, timeless abstract entities, they must necessarily eternally create if they create at all. The crucial point to consider is Leslie believes there is an ethical requirement that compels this good universe to exist which flows from the ethical values themselves. This is why he states the universe's existence is *Ethically Required*. The universe is the product of "*Its being forever ethically necessary for there to exist things or objects of certain description.*"⁵⁴ Thus, from the very nature of the abstract, yet very real ethical values, the universe necessarily and eternally flows.

Leslie argues there is no absurdity in the notion of ethical values creating the universe. "*Causally or creatively effective ethical requirements* are surely not quite as preposterous as *virtuous meteorites or quadratic equations quarrelling.*"⁵⁵ Ethical necessity is at least a possibility because we know it is possible for ethical necessity to cause things. "Different though *an ethical necessity* and a *practically powerful necessity* may be, they are at least more analogous to each other than to stretching ten thousand kilometers, being crimson or occurring at noon on Monday."⁵⁶ Leslie agrees it is difficult to justify the notion that ethical values created the universe. The most he can say is, "How could something's ethical requiredness do anything? . . . Somewhat as something's being reddish does when it forms a basis for its being purple. Being ethically marked out for existence provides the foundation for being marked out with creative effectiveness". . . ⁵⁷ This is still somewhat ambiguous, but Leslie insists the fact it cannot be made completely intelligible does not mean it cannot be true.

Leslie feels the only alternative to his theory is Brute Fact, "Of conceivable universes, the vast majority would be chaotic; what then persuades events in ours to conform to laws? Why does any situation change predictably, not in one of infinitely many other ways?"⁵⁸ Like Peikoff and Fisk, Leslie argues his theory

explains why there are laws rather than chaos.

The choice then seems between (i) the universe, or some part bearing creative responsibility for the others, just happening to be there, and (ii) the universe (perhaps including a divine person) existing thanks to its ethical requiredness. The one qualification which might be needed is that such requiredness might instead be responsible only for a divine person, leaving it up to him to create all else; but. . .this looks both tidy and inessential to Christianity, for instance, which worships goodness and not sheer power-not even when it conceives as God as a person.⁵⁹

Leslie argues for his position in a number of ways including from the mere existence of things and from the presence of life in the universe. Leslie defends compatibilism, phenomenology and monism in his concept of free will. For Leslie, the universe is one thing, conceived in a pantheistic and idealistic manner. The universe exists as one throughout time and exists only for and through consciousness. This is not to say external objects don't exist, but rather that they only exist mentally. Leslie states, "His [the axiarchist] view that only the mental has any straightforwardly real existence would be unacceptably queer if he held that such existence extended to everything inside the skull and nothing else."⁶⁰ But for Leslie, it does not. "So instead of believing that the universe, the sum of all existence, is a single existentially unified theater of consciousness, the axiarchist should expect infinitely many such theaters."⁶¹

Finally, Leslie defends the concept of the universe as the best of all possible worlds. It is this premise which enables Leslie's argument to be categorized as a Necessary Universe theory. He writes, "If an ethical requirement can produce a universe, we could expect a best possible one. Philosophical optimism flows naturally from axiarchism."⁶² But not only is this the best of all possible worlds, it is in a sense the only possible world. For abstract entities create necessarily, and being necessarily creative of the best, they will necessarily create the best possible world, which, contrary to appearances, happens to be this one. After all, abstract entities cannot choose in any sense of the word.

J.L. Mackie examined and criticized Leslie's theory.⁶³ Leslie in turn responded to Mackie's charges that there is no evidence of value's creative power, the intrinsic ethical requiredness is too queer and finally that value's creative power conflicts with known facts.⁶⁴ While I believe Leslie had the better of the argument (though perhaps only because he had the last word), this does not mean Leslie's position is unassailable, for there are other problems which Mackie did not raise.

The first problem is in Leslie's statement that ethical values will necessarily create the best possible world. There is no best possible world, for any world that one can non-contradictorily imagine, one can non-contradictorily imagine a better one. For example if there is 1 googleplex pleasurable experience in one world, then it seems there are worlds with 1 googleplex + 1 pleasurable experiences. 'The best possible world' seems to be a concept whose coherence is the same as 'the greatest possible integer'. All possible pleasures cannot exist, for the existence of some is

contradictory to the existence of others. If this line of argument is sound, it becomes crucial against axiarchism. For if the thesis is that ethical values necessarily create, and necessarily create the best of all possible worlds, and there is no best possible world, then the whole theory collapses.

Further, if there are creative ethical values, then they must create the best. Ethical values are impersonal; they cannot grasp all of the potential possibilities and choose between them, as a personal God could. Instead, they would act necessarily and 'mechanically', creating a world with the same impersonal necessity that entails $2 + 2 = 4$. If it were said that ethical values could create a world less than 'the Best', but a good world nonetheless, this would be stating that either the values made a choice, which is impossible, or they choose the world randomly. The latter would make the fact this is the world which was picked a brute fact. That is, the ethical values might have necessarily created a world, but the fact they created this world rather than some other world is by chance. If this world is merely a brute fact, then no necessary connection exists between the ethical values and the individual concretes in the universe. If there are no necessary relations, then the ethical values cannot be the creative power which brings the universe into existence, for abstract entities can only act necessarily if at all. Thus, ethical values, if they are creative, must necessarily create the best of all possible worlds. Any incoherence in this notion will kill the whole theory.

Even if there were a best possible world, it does not mean Leslie's theory is true. There are other significant problems within this premise, the greatest of which is the notion that the ethical values will necessarily create a world. As we have seen, the concept of logical necessity is inextricably tied to the concept of contradiction. That is, for any truth which is logically necessary, the denial must necessarily entail a contradiction. The contradiction may not be obvious or easy to find, indeed, it may be beyond human powers to show, such as in the case of certain mathematical theorems. Nonetheless, by its very nature, a logical necessity is dependent upon the law of contradiction. This being the case, if one posits the existence of ethical values which necessarily create a universe, then one must also say there is a contradiction in the denial of this. That is, one must believe that to deny ethical values necessarily create is to embrace a contradiction. And this is simply false. There is no contradiction generated by denying that ethical values necessarily create.

To understand this point, one must keep in mind Leslie's theory that ethical values have necessary existence and necessarily generated this universe. As seen above, the existence of such values is a problem if they exist autonomously. For such values, if true, are necessarily true, and yet it does not generate a contradiction to deny them. For example, 'murder is wrong' seems to be necessarily true, yet there is no contradiction entailed by denying it. However, even if this problem is ignored and things proceed to the next level, which is the creation of the universe, things get no better. There is no contradiction in the concept of ethical values not creating. That is, there is nothing contradictory or incoherent about necessary ethical values just 'sitting there' and not creating anything.

Leslie states it is ethically required for certain good situations to exist in the universe. But where is the necessity in this? Even if 'ethically required', how does this receive necessary force? There are many things which are ethically required but do not happen. It may be ethically required that Smith tell the truth, yet there is no necessity in his doing so. Hence, the fact that something is ethically required does not make it necessarily true. An extreme axiarchist would no doubt respond this is a different sense of ethical requiredness. But it is difficult to see the difference. If the mere existence of ethical values ensures that certain things happen, why doesn't it ensure people always tell the truth? This is the only real sense one has of being ethically required; Leslie's sense of ethical requiredness, causing the existence of the universe, is entirely hypothetical. If Leslie's sense of ethical requiredness is the same as in ordinary language, then the fact that something is ethically required does not ensure that something will be the case. If it is a different sense, then it is something we do not know, and thus to call it 'ethical requiredness' is misleading.

Another way of looking at this is to consider the kind of necessity the ethical values and the universe they supposedly create, could have. As argued in chapter one, there are four kinds of necessity; tautological, analytic, synthetic and metaphysical. Tautology is obviously irrelevant here, the necessity we are examining is nothing like 'All bachelor's are unmarried'. Analytic necessity is out as 'A cube has 12 edges' is not like ethical values necessarily creating. Synthetic necessity, the way I have defined it, is also irrelevant. This merely explains how certain concepts necessarily interact with others, e.g., 'nothing can be colored red and green at the same time' and this is not the case here; Leslie is saying the universe necessarily flows from the ethical values. Finally, metaphysical necessity, the necessity of identity; 'water is necessarily H_2O ', is irrelevant to ethical values necessarily being the cause of the universe. Based on this, there is no contradiction in denying ethical values created the universe. The statement that the contradiction cannot be seen as the being is too complex (as is true in the case of God) is untrue when considering ethical values, for they are in a way quite simple. Leslie supposes that the universe simply flows from ethical values and there is no contradiction in denying they necessarily do this.

Another major problem with Leslie's argument is how abstract entities can create at all. Leslie argues at length there is no absurdity inherent in this concept, but even he admits the notion is rather opaque. How can abstract objects bring into existence concrete ones? Abstract objects exist nowhere, at no time and they never change. How then can they be causally related, indeed, necessarily causally related to the world of concrete objects? An abstract object could be analyzed exhaustively without ever deducing from the analysis any particular object, place, time or event. One can never infer the existence of any green thing from the concept of greenness. There is thus no necessary relation in the relevant sense⁶⁵ between an abstract object and any individual. This is especially true when considering ethical values. Ethical values take the form, 'Stealing is wrong' or 'One ought to keep one's promises'. How could anything such as these be necessarily related to the particular computer

that sits on my particular desk? All abstracts entail are other abstractions. There is no, and by their very nature cannot be, any necessary relation between an abstract and the existence, at some specific moment in space and time, of some concrete entity which is always changing in various ways. In extreme axiarchism, everything which exists is necessarily caused by ethical values. But an ethical value could be examined indefinitely without ever finding a necessary link from the value to a contingent being. There cannot be, by the very nature of abstract and concrete entities, any bond between them wherein the abstract necessitates the existence of an individual.

The extreme axiarchist believes that ethical values necessarily create the best of all possible worlds, and that everything which exists in this world is necessarily part of that world. Or, in other words, ethical values necessarily create the best of all possible worlds, which is the actual world, and everything in this world is analytic to the best possible world. But even overlooking the problems outlined above, the question remains: How could a set of abstractions, impersonal abstract objects, realize that this is the best of all possible worlds and then bring it into existence? This world is an awfully complex place, as are the other possible worlds. Abstract ethical values are simple and few. From them, there is no way to generate the complexity and contingency of the actual world. There is no necessary tie between abstract ethical values and any concrete entity or event. The world remains irreducibly contingent, e.g., that there are 24 people in the building where I now sit is not a truth that can be derived from abstract entities.

If it is argued that ethical values created this world with 24 people in the building where I sit because it is part of the best possible world, then it could be said this is only the best possible world because of everything which composes it. Extreme axiarchists believe that necessarily the best of everything possible is instantiated and this then becomes the necessary entailment. But, in the case of possible worlds, the whole is the sum of its parts. Thus one could only know this is the best possible world if one knew everything in it. This would be the best of all possible worlds only because its specific parts and the sum of all the relations between them. But then, contrary to extreme axiarchism, it is the parts of the world which are primary. In other words, the best of all possible worlds is determined by the things in it, and not the other way around. So in order to create the best of all possible worlds, one would need know all the parts of which it is constructed. This is impossible for abstract entities because they are impersonal and they necessarily have no necessary causal relation with anything concrete. Thus, no answer is possible to the question of how abstract entities could actualize any concrete entities.

There is a further problem because the ethical values are supposed to create, in every situation, the best situation coherent with being part of the best of all possible worlds. But what if two or more things of equal value could fit into one situation? Let us assume when considering goodness it would be of equal value if something were painted green or blue. How then do the ethical values 'decide' what color to give something? The reply that it is because of the overall situation, especially the causal history, only postpones the problem. What if two or more overall situations

or causal histories were equal in value? It is incredible to believe that changing the universe in any respect would decrease its value. But if there are other equally valuable alternatives how is one 'chosen'? Ethical values, being abstract impersonal objects, obviously cannot make a choice. And according to the theory of extreme axiarchism, there is no other reason why the actual world and everything in it exists except for the goodness of this world. Yet one entity, event or property is instantiated instead of equally valuable alternatives. Therefore the fact one was instantiated instead of another would have to be merely a brute fact.

The next Necessary Universe position to be examined is that of Quentin Smith. Smith derives his theory from the current debate on the Big Bang origin of the universe and offers his theory as part of a critique of Stephen Hawking's concept of the universe being 'closed'.⁶⁶ This means if 'imaginary time' is assumed to be real time, then there is no difference between space and time, and thus no need to posit a beginning to the universe. While Smith finds Hawking's theory badly flawed, he believes it can be amended. Perhaps the most important amendment he would like to make is regarding the Hawking wave function, the equation which is supposed to describe the universe. Smith writes, "It is epistemically possible that Hawking's quantum cosmology maximally explains the universe only if it is epistemically possible that his wave function law is necessarily true."⁶⁷ After noting that Hawking's theory may be impossible,⁶⁸ Smith goes on to defend a modified version of this theory. He notes:

If we know so little about the complete unified theory that we do not even know if any of the extant working models for this theory are mathematically consistent, then we do not know enough to rule out the possibility that there is only one complete unified theory that is mathematically consistent. If there is more than one complete theory that is consistent, then observational considerations will decide among them and none will be logically true. But if there is only one theory that is consistent, then it will be true of logical necessity. In this case, Wheeler's idea of a 'physics as a manifestation of logic', will have some meaning.⁶⁹

As Smith is arguing hypothetically we do not know how many mathematically consistent unified theories there are. The premise there is only one is purely a supposition. However, granting this as a possibility, Smith goes on to say, "Perhaps a more plausible way to phrase this is to ask if it is epistemically possible that Hawking's wave function approximates in outline form a complete unified theory of the universe that is true of logical necessity". . . .⁷⁰ Smith calls this theory *T* and our universe *U* and in his argument this is the reason the universe exists as it does. Smith goes on to suppose *T* entails:

(9.14) There is an 85 per cent probability that there exists some universe in a set of very similar possible universes that includes among its members *U*.⁷¹

Given all of this, if *T* is necessarily true, then our universe *U*, exists for a reason, albeit a probabilistic one, which Smith names *P*. Smith writes, "The proposition

(*P*)'s property of being true would then have an analogous role to God's-freely-creating-*U*-in-order-to-realize-goodness, namely, that it serves to *explain U*. However, since *T* is necessarily true, (*P*) is necessarily true."⁷²

The above argument has several key premises, but remember Smith is only arguing that Hawking's position, or one close to it, might be true. One of the key premises of Smith's argument is that a version of the PSR is true. Another, which Smith admits is unknown, is there is only one unified theory of the universe which is logically possible. And the final key premise is the high percentage of probability attached to the existence of a set of similar universes which include *U*, our universe. The probability Smith assumes hypothetically is 85%. But, granting all of the above, what if the correct percentage is really 1/100,000,000,000%? This change would greatly reduce the probability of our universe existing. But as Smith is arguing hypothetically, I will waive this.

A much more serious objection is built on the following. Smith speaks in terms of there possibly being "only one mathematically consistent theory of a maximal physical system or universe, or, more specifically, of the gravitation-cum-quantum-mechanical structure of reality."⁷³ He seems to mean that from an epistemic viewpoint there is only one mathematically consistent theory of a universe with gravitation, quantum and mechanical laws. Simply put, only one theory allows for a universe such as ours to exist. Any other theory would in fact be inconsistent, and therefore impossible. If this is true, and if a universe such as ours exists, then it is logically necessary for this theory to be the basis of our universe. Unfortunately, Smith is somewhat vague on this point, but in my opinion this is the best interpretation of his theory. Smith could argue that we do have a causal reason for the existence of the universe. That is, he could argue only one unified theory is consistent, therefore if there is going to be a universe such as our own, this is the theory which necessarily describes it. However, due to quantum mechanics, this is necessarily a probabilistic theory, so while a universe like our own is necessary, which one is a matter of probability. Hence, this is a weak Necessary Universe theory, for if the universe exists, entities necessarily act according to Hawking's wave function law. But it is not necessary for there to be a universe at all.

This theory is subject to a number of problems. First, it seems false that there is only one mathematically consistent theory of the universe. In fact, there seem to be an infinite number of mathematically consistent sets of laws which could describe a universe. For example, a universe where half the forces of nature were double their present strength and half had half of their present strength seems logically consistent. The second problem with this theory is if there is only one mathematically consistent theory of the universe, then the laws in the universe are necessarily entailed by this theory. Let us call the theory *T*. The other laws which exist are that gravity has a specific strength, as does the strong nuclear force, etc. If Smith's theory is true, then it is logically impossible for the specific laws of nature, such as the strength of gravity, to be other than they are. But this is impossible. For if the law of gravity were other than it is, then by modus tollens *T* would not be true. The only way an equation can be inconsistent is if the factors on

the opposite sides of the equal sign are different. For example, if T is $2xyz = 2abc$ and if the strength of gravity were different than it is, one might get an equation of $2.5xyz = 2abc$. The possibility of a resulting contradiction could be avoided if the right hand side of the equation were changed to $2.5abc$. Although one would then have a different equation, it would still be a consistent equation.

If the only criterion is logical consistency, then infinite sets of laws which are internally consistent can be generated. Of course, as pointed out by scientists working on the anthropic cosmological principle, most of these universes would be unlivable and most would probably end up being very dissimilar to the actual universe, e.g., they could collapse into a singularity, or become nothing but radiation, or all turn into neutrino's, etc. If Smith's point is (and I think it is) that the present universe, or similar universes could only exist via one consistent set of laws, then there is only one mathematically consistent set of laws, which, if made to govern a universe, would not result in chaos, or the universe collapsing back into a singularity, or something of that manner. This, however does not prove that this set of laws is logically necessary. While it is epistemically possible for there to be only one consistent 'gravity-cum-quantum-mechanical structure of reality', this is irrelevant. Other possible universes may exist with different sets of laws, but just because there is only one theory under which a stable universe could develop (and wherein rational beings could exist) out of an infinite number of theories, there is still, on atheistic grounds, no reason explaining why this theory would be the one actualized.

Analogously, let us suppose there is a man in front of a firing squad. Excluding any other factors (like all the members of the firing squad being bribed to miss) there is one chance in a trillion the firing squad will miss. Let us further suppose the firing squad fires, and does in fact miss. This is hardly justification for thinking that it was logically necessary for the firing squad to miss; rather, it just proves the man was incredibly lucky. So, even if there was only one theory which could explain the development of the universe into its current form, this hardly means it was logically necessary for this theory be the one that governs the universe. It just means, from an atheistic perspective, that we are incredibly lucky.

To make matters worse, the MWI (Many Worlds Interpretation) of quantum physics, upon which Hawking's theory depends, is like all laws of nature, an abstraction. It does not have independent existence as a concrete, existing entity; it is merely a description of how objects do in fact act. Physical laws, having no independent existence, cannot *cause* things to act as they do. Thus, from an atheistic viewpoint the question: 'Why do things act the way they do?' remains unanswered. A worse question is, why does each particle in existence act the way it does? Based on logic, there is no reason for the same particles to continue to act in the same manner and follow the same equations, over time. For any entity P , say a proton, there are many logically possible ways in which it could act. For example, it could move in many different directions in any situation and logically keep the same status. The same is true all of P 's other properties; there is no logical reason why protons like P should always have the charge they do. It must be reiterated that

every particle and every moment a particle exists is logically independent of every other. There is no necessary connection between any two or more particles. There are many logically possible ways in which they could exist or behave. This being the case, there is no necessary relation between any equation or theorem and the actual activity of any existing particles.

Even if there were only one set of equations which allowed for a universe, which seems false, there would still not be a necessary relation between these equations or theorems and the activity of any particular particles at any particular point in space and time. No particular entity, event, place or time can be derived from the concept of some abstract entity. An abstract entity can only act necessarily, and to act necessarily means a denial of that action entails a contradiction. The mere existence of some equation or theorem that supposedly guides the behavior of the universe cannot provide necessity, for there is no contradiction entailed by supposing that some particular proton does not at some time act in the prescribed manner. It may 'contradict' the equation by not following its prescribed course, but this is not a contradiction in the sense that the proton both did and did not have a particular charge. There would be no contradiction in the proton's being or activity. If according to the equation or theorem the proton should have a charge of +1 and the proton actually had a charge of +.9, this would contradict the equation or theorem, yet it would hardly mean that the concept of the entity which was the proton was incoherent. This issue has already been discussed in detail in the section dealing with Objectivism. I will simply reiterate there is no necessary relation between the equation and the proton. Thus, because of a lack of logical necessity the equation cannot control the behavior of the objects in the universe.⁷⁴

In fairness to Smith I must point out that he has put forth his theory with great tentativeness. Interestingly, in an earlier work Smith was a strong Brute Fact advocate. In this work he writes, "The world's existence is non-necessary and the concept of it as existing necessarily is incoherent."⁷⁵ Later he writes, "The existing of the world-whole is not a *mystery*, but a *miracle*, and a *causeless* and *purposeless occurrence*. The world-whole exists even though it could not exist, and it exists without its existence being caused or having a purpose."⁷⁶ Even more to the point, Smith affirms that the whole universe, what he calls the world-whole, could cease to exist. He writes:

The world-whole is miraculous in that at each moment it realizes one of two possibilities, even though it is not necessary for it to realize this possibility rather than the other one. At each moment the world could either *happen* or *not happen*, and I marvel that the world happens, and continues to happen, and avoids the possibility of not happening. At each moment, the world-whole stands before the abyss of nothingness, but it does not vanish into this abyss; it continues, and in so continuing it overcomes again and again the possibility of nonexisting. It is miraculous that the other possibility, the possibility of plunging into nothingness, is not realized, for this is *equally as possible* as the possibility that it is realized.⁷⁷

As the above is Brute Fact theory with a vengeance, either Smith has changed his mind or his presentation of the concept, the universe exists out of logical necessity, is merely a hypothesis.⁷⁸ How could Smith's atheistic wave function theory in which the universe exists for no reason and could disappear at any moment provide a superior explanation of why the universe exists to theists?

Thus far we have examined several explanations for the necessary existence of the universe. Among them were a version of physicalism, a combination version of physicalism and abstract objects and now two theories of abstract objects, one of ethical values and the other of equations. All of these versions have been proven to be inadequate Necessary Universe theories, and yet these possibilities seem to run the gamut including both concrete and abstract objects. Our examination has shown it is impossible for either finite concrete objects or abstract objects to give necessity to the universe.⁷⁹ If Necessary Universe theory is to be rescued, what's left? By definition of the Necessary Universe theory, any appeal to theism can be ruled out. However, there is one alternative left, classical pantheism, or an appeal to the Absolute.

Norman Geisler and David Clark list five different kinds of pantheism: permeational pantheism, modal pantheism, absolute pantheism, multilevel pantheism, emanational pantheism.⁸⁰ Permeational pantheism believes there is some sort of force or thing which permeates the universe. In this case, God or the absolute would pervade the universe, but the universe, although dependent upon this God, would not be part of this God. God would be similar to a force or energy field. This kind of pantheism is not relevant to our discussion because the universe would have to be necessarily caused by a permeating force which would itself have to be necessary. It would be impossible for such a force to be a necessary being because many of the criticisms which applied to beings other than the GPB in chapter four would apply to it. Thus, permeational pantheism is inadequate as a model for a necessary absolute.

Emanational pantheism, where the universe is a necessary emanation of the absolute will be dealt with in the next chapter as a variant of the Necessary Deity theory (although some things relevant to that theory will be discussed here). Multilevel pantheism's meaning is unclear. In this variant, the absolute or god exists at the highest level of reality, while all other things exist at some dependent or lower level of reality. As theism also states this premise, the important difference between the two becomes the meaning of what is ultimate. In theism God is ultimate and in pantheism the absolute is ultimate.

The finite world is a part, or mode of God's infinite being or essence in modal pantheism. Here the universe is necessarily a part of God's essence. This means, for example, that my computer is necessarily part of God. The problem with this is it leads to the conclusion that if God and his properties have necessary existence, then either the necessity is in the computer itself, or in some other part of the pantheistic God. If the necessity is in the computer, then the problems surrounding the necessity of finite concrete beings arise. If the necessity is in some other part of God, then one must ask where. Again, the same problems reappear in either

some concrete or abstract part of this pantheistic God. The only escape is in saying the necessity comes from the absolute. But this leads to absolute pantheism wherein all that exists is the absolute, while the universe is an illusion. In other words all that exists is the absolute and the 'appearances', which are really somehow reflections of the absolute.

The difference between the various kinds of pantheism are actually less important than it may appear at first glance. The importance lies in the concept of the Absolute. What is the Absolute? This is difficult to say. As C.S. Lewis writes, "Now the Absolute cannot be made clear. Do you mean Nobody-knows-what, or do you mean a superhuman mind and therefore (we may as well admit) a Person?"⁸¹ To state the Absolute is a person is a move in the direction of theism. Indeed, some philosophers have done this, as in the case of Borden Parker Bowne.⁸² In this discussion however, we are exploring alternatives to theism, so we must view the concept of the Absolute as being something else. Even given this limitation, there are different concepts of the Absolute. Fortunately, there are enough core concepts in common to provide a description of the Absolute in terms that most pantheists and Absolute Idealists would agree with. In contrast with theism, Lewis writes this about the Absolute:

The Absolute Mind-better still, the Absolute, was impersonal, or it knew itself (but not us?) only in us, and was so absolute that it wasn't really much more like a mind than anything else. And anyway, the more muddled one got about it and the more contradictions one committed, the more this proved that our discursive thought move only on the level of 'Appearance' and 'Reality' must be somewhere else. And where else but, of course, the Absolute.⁸³

Lewis is an unfriendly witness, but Absolute Idealists believe the notion of all things being somehow one in the Absolute. Lewis wrote, "The Absolute was 'there', and that 'there' contained the reconciliation of all contraries, the transcendence of all finitude, the hidden glory of the only perfectly real thing there is."⁸⁴ Regarding F.H. Bradley's doctrine of the Absolute, H.B. Acton writes, "Bradley maintained that mere appearances are conflicting and self-contradictory and that reality or the Absolute must therefore be harmonious and consistent. The self-contradictory character of appearances is due to their relatedness and therefore the Absolute must not contain relations."⁸⁵ Or, as Bradley himself states, "Reality [the Absolute] is one. It must be single, because plurality, taken as real, contradicts itself. Plurality implies relations, and, through its relations, it unwillingly asserts always a superior unity."⁸⁶

To sum up, for Bradley, Absolute Idealists and other pantheists, the Absolute is generally thought to be one pure unity, without any plurality or relations in it whatsoever, but within which all the plurality and relations of the universe are somehow contained. It is mental or spiritual, or even some sort of mind, but it is not personal, and thus is not God. The universe, that is, the world around us which experience reveals to us, is only an appearance. It is not real, but in some sense

only the out-flowing of the reality which lies within the Absolute. For Bradley in particular this universe cannot be real as it contains relations and relations are self-contradictory. This is all somewhat vague, but as Lewis stated the Absolute cannot be made clear. Perhaps the closest one can come to understanding this is by analogy to immediate experience. As Acton writes, "In this pre-reflective experience, subject and object are not yet differentiated, and there is diversity without numerical plurality."⁸⁷ Even though this seems highly dubious to me, the important task is to now investigate the relation of the Absolute to necessity.

By the logic of the system the Absolute must be necessary. And if the Absolute is an impersonal necessary something, then what emanates out of it must also be necessary. For the purposes of this book it is not necessary for every pantheistic thinker to believe the whole of reality is logically necessary. As pantheists believe the world of everyday experience is only an appearance, it is easy for them to deny its apparent contingency by stating it is an illusion. For them, the whole world is a kind of illusion.

Our investigation will concentrate on Brand Blanshard, who develops the notion that everything is logically necessary. He begins with an attack on the idea that the laws of nature are not necessary, but merely uniform; basically he attacks the Brute Fact theory.⁸⁸ Blanshard goes on to describe what kind of necessity explains the uniformity of the universe. He then replies to C.D. Broad's suggestion that there are two types of necessity 'universal law' or contingent necessity and 'absolute necessity', and rejects contingent necessity.⁸⁹

The reason Blanshard rejects the notion of contingent necessity should be familiar by now. He argues it doesn't really explain the necessity because the necessity rests on contingency. Blanshard's definition of contingent and absolute necessity is synonymous with my definition of factual and logical necessity. Blanshard claims causal laws are really absolute, that is, logically necessary, though he is modest enough to admit he does not strictly prove his case. He states, "Granting that some things are related through a necessity linking their qualities, and that some events are related through the necessity implicit in causation, is there any good ground that *all* things and events are inter-related necessarily?"⁹⁰ Unfortunately in this work Blanshard does not spell out his full theory, but enough is given to form a basic understanding. To summarize, Blanshard holds *everything* is necessarily related to everything else in some respect. The necessity in this premise is logical and therefore, everything exists as it is necessarily. The universe is one large necessary being and everything which exists within it is part of the necessary whole. Hence, Blanshard's theory is really a strong version of the Necessary Universe theory.

Blanshard commits the fallacy of false alternatives. He attacks the notion that the causal laws of the universe are contingent concluding they are all logically necessary. But in reaching this conclusion he overlooks the possibility that the laws of the universe are contingent and exist because of the will of a logically necessary God. Blanshard does not even consider the Necessary Deity position. Another problem in Blanshard's theory ultimately arises because he does not accept the Absolute as personal, rather he perceives it as being impersonal. Because of this,

he must explain with abstract principles why all of the contingency in the universe is really necessary. And this will ultimately destroy the contingency and particularity of the universe. To experience this first-hand one must consider another aspect of Blanshard's Absolute Idealism. In an earlier work, Blanshard wrote:

[T]he belief in spatio-temporal particulars leads in the end to worse nonsense still, since it involves the denial of identity. And because there was some hope of escaping the nonsense about space and time, if we could suppose these to be other than they seemed, while there was no hope whatever if we gave up identity, we threw our lot in with the latter.⁹¹

Blanshard opts for the unreality of the world around us. He agrees with Bradley that the world is merely an appearance and reality is the only Absolute. Blanshard writes, "For all that we commonly call particulars, pots and pans, mountains and rivers, are now seen to be universals. The only true particular is the absolute."⁹² That the space-time universe is a necessary projection of the necessary Absolute is the result of several philosophic commitments. One of these is the rejection of contingency and another is the rejection of individuality. When put together one gets a system where everything exists necessarily, but only as an appearance. Blanshard states, "Are we to say that every thought is the start of a pilgrimage which, if pressed, would take us *everywhere* else? We shall find this hard to gainsay."⁹³ The reason for the pilgrimage is that everything is necessarily connected with everything else, and it is all somehow necessarily tied together in the Absolute.

The whole conception of the Absolute seems dubious at best. Even in Blanshard's accounting of things there are universals which come off as appearances and the relations between them, necessarily exist. For example, consider the colors red and blue who have the relationship that the color red is *closer, that is, more like*, the color orange than the color blue. Now according to Absolute Idealism there are no relations in the Absolute. So the colors red and blue, since they must have their foundation in the Absolute, do not have that relation in the Absolute. But if they do not have that relation in the Absolute, then they are not the colors red and blue, for it is a necessary truth about these colors that they have this specific relation. If the colors red and blue subsist in some kind of Absolute, they would still be required to have all of their essential properties. Thus, the Absolute could not be without relations and differentiation. The Absolute would have to be more like a mind, wherein different things could subsist separately, and their relations could still necessarily exist. But this sounds more like the God of classical theism than it does the Absolute. The very concept of the Absolute, which destroys individuality, is unable to account for the existence of things.

Additional problems plague the pantheistic view as it does not provide an explanation of why the world exists. Regarding this Thomas Molnar writes, "Yet the question is again: why did the Plotinian *One*, Spinoza's *deus sive natura*, Hegel's *Weltgeist*, or the Hindu's *Brahman* not remain in itself? How should we

understand the proliferation of *otherness*, . . . that . . . are but modes or modifications, of a single substance?"⁹⁴ Why and how, does the Absolute, who is absolutely and totally unified, without relation or differentiation, project the world of individuality, particularity and contingency? How does the universe, which is supposedly just an appearance of the Absolute, create even the appearance of all the diversity and contingency contained within it. Gordon Clark writes, "Monists are usually not too clear as to how such subsidiary dualism arises from the pristine unity."⁹⁵ In the pantheist model the Absolute will only create mechanically. Molnar states:

When, on the other hand, the personalness of God is denied, only something mechanical can take its place, whether this mechanical is spiritual or material. In this case, however, the reality of the world of human experience, its wide range from mysticism to science, must be either denied and declared to be an illusion, or, if it is accepted as a reality, it must be explained *why* the Supreme Mechanism-Nature, One, or Weltgeist-produced it. Now if the Supreme Mechanism produced reality by an act of will or out of a need, or again out of a benevolent or malevolent whim, then it is no longer a mechanism, it possesses a personality, a soul and intelligence, an aspiration—all of them attributes that the pantheist philosopher rejects nevertheless as anthropomorphic! If it is not produced by any personal or intelligent ingredient in the mechanism, then the mechanism cannot be the single substance of the universe; some other substance, force, or will outside the universe compelled or influenced it to produce 'otherness', that is the things which find in the world and in ourselves. In my view, pantheism cannot escape the horns of this dilemma.⁹⁶

The reason for this is that a pure oneness, as the Absolute is supposed to be, cannot refer to another, and thus cannot necessarily produce the otherness that is the universe by itself. Even if the universe were an illusion, the same question could be asked: How and why did the Absolute produce the illusion, and the illusory beings who experience the illusion? Pantheism has no answer to this.

Furthermore, there is no answer to the problem of contingency. If, as Blanshard says, everything exists of logical necessity, then for things to be other than they are is logically impossible. That the blue pencil on my desk be $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch from where it lies would be impossible just as $2 + 2 = 3$ is impossible. This claim is implausible and not just to some world-views. It seems obvious that it is not *logically* impossible for my blue pencil to have been in a slightly different place than it in fact is; no contradiction follows from the denial of this.

Besides the dilemma with the counter-intuitiveness of everything being logically necessary, is the problem that everything which is logically necessary in the world of appearance must necessarily be produced by the Absolute. But then the Absolute must contain something correlative to everything which exists in the world of appearance. For example, there must be something in the Absolute that necessarily produces the appearance of my blue pencil. But we have already seen there is no relation or differentiation in the Absolute. How then could some specific thing like my blue pencil, with specific properties existing at a specific time and place, be

produced by an undifferentiated oneness? This question can be asked of every other entity which exists in the universe and of all the relations between them. The question of why there are so many different things, all varying from one another can also be asked. The Absolute has no way of accounting for specificity, or difference. And yet the whole universe is in some sense nothing but specificity; made of entities which have a specific nature that could conceivably have been otherwise.

According to Blanshard and other pantheists, everything which exists, like my pencil, is a matter of logical necessity and these objects are really just projections from the Absolute. Therefore, in order for my pencil to exist, there must be something within the Absolute that is correlative to the pencil and which necessarily produces it. But what kind of thing in the Absolute would necessarily project a blue pencil? There seems to be an infinite number of other possible worlds which are filled with many different things than are contained in the actual world. For example, in some of them, there is a green pencil in the space where my blue pencil is. The primary question remains: Why does the Absolute project this world rather than some other like the green pencil world? What is necessary about the appearance of a blue pencil and not a green pencil? There is no necessity in the nature of the pencils themselves, because as we have seen, there is no contradiction in the denial of the existence of the blue pencil. So the necessity must lie within the Absolute. The part of the Absolute which is correlative to the blue pencil is thus necessary. But if this is true, the problem remains unsolved. For what within the very nature of the Absolute makes it necessarily project a blue pencil rather than a green pencil or something else? There is no contradiction entailed in thinking that instead of a part which projects a blue pencil, there is a part which projects a green pencil. Therefore this part is not necessary but contingent, and brute fact has now become part of the Absolute. If it is argued that everything is necessary because it is a necessary part of the whole, this only provides *De Dicto* necessity. For why couldn't the whole have been different?

The entailment works both ways. If the Absolute projects this world of appearance necessarily, then this world of appearance must be necessary. But if this world is contingent, as it is in the sense that there is no contradiction in thinking it could have been different, then the Absolute only projects contingently. If the Absolute projects this universe, then this is the only universe it could project. But since this universe is extremely complex, specific and differentiated, then there must be within the Absolute a correlation to all the complexity, specificity and differentiation. The Absolute must necessarily have this particular complexity, specificity and differentiation. But why should it have this particular set, and not some other set, so that another universe is projected? After all, this particular set of complexity, specificity and differentiation is only one of an infinite number of particular sets. Placing the necessity on the Absolute solves nothing, for the question remains why this specific set is necessary. No answer can be given as one cannot account for particularity, complexity, specificity and differentiation in an undifferentiated oneness. In addition to this, if the Absolute is correlative to the universe, then it is internally constructed in some specific way. Why that specific

way instead of another? There is no necessity in the Absolute which would make it necessarily project a blue pencil rather than a green one. All the correlation does is put contingency, and therefore brute fact, into the Absolute itself.

The Absolute theory fails at contingency. As the Absolute is impersonal it cannot, unlike God, choose from different alternatives. It just mindlessly projects the universe. It had no choice, so there was only one universe it could project. Thus, there is no reason for the universe not to 'look' necessary. So why is it contingent? In short, the universe is full of "brute facts", facts that cannot be derived from abstract principles alone. The Absolute is proposed to account for them, yet cannot possibly do so. From abstract, universal principles, no individuality can emerge. Hence, if there are individuals in the Absolute, then they must be contingent, for they project a contingent universe.

Much more could be said in opposition to the proposal that the Absolute is the reason for the existence of the universe, but we shall only look at two brief additional criticisms. First, in the hypothesis of the Absolute, reality is ultimately impersonal and abstract. When does change come into play? If the Absolute is necessary and impersonal, then whatever sufficient and necessary reasons it has for projecting the universe should be eternally operative. There is no accounting for change or contingency in this view, as an abstract oneness cannot project these. The Absolute would project a universe which is necessary and unchangeable as it would be produced mechanically by an eternal and necessary being who could not weigh alternatives and then select one.

Second, pantheism undercuts knowledge and justification. For in the pantheist scenario, the universe, that is the world our senses reveal to us, is either unreal or only an appearance (whatever that may mean). It is not the 'real' reality, indeed, the world revealed by sensation is very different than the world of the Absolute. But since most of what one believes is revealed via sensation, it is erroneous as to the true nature of reality. It should be noted that on pantheist grounds the act of believing something is itself an appearance. It is not true reality, rather it is only something the Absolute for some reason projects. On what basis then can one's senses and thinking be trusted? In both objections, one is thinking from the perspective of a finite, changing ego in a system where finitude and change are illusory. As Geisler and Clark write:

Do pantheists speak from the finite, individual perspective of empirical egos or not? If they do, it appears that the statements they utter concerning the unreality of their own finite existence self-destruct. If they do not and if they claim instead to speak from God's ultimate perspective, it seems that they are introducing into God doses of fallibility and mutability.⁹⁷

In brief, pantheistic theory is self-referentially incoherent. If to escape this, pantheistists move away from the idea that the universe is unreal and toward the notion it is a real creation, they have moved in the direction of theism.

I have examined many different candidates for the Necessary Universe theory.

These have included a materialistic theory, a semi-materialistic theory, a theory which appeals to ethical values, a theory which appeals to equations, and a theory which appeals to the concept of the Absolute. Thus one has concrete objects, abstract objects, and the Absolute, being the source of a necessary universe. It is difficult to conceive of some other alternative, and yet all of these have failed. The reasons for these failures differ, but the core problem is simply that it is impossible to deduce contingent truths from abstract ones. From an abstract truth, e.g., the nature of a proton, the ethical rightness or wrongness of some notion and an equation or the concept of the Absolute, one cannot 'get to' any particular object in space and time. There is no necessary connection which will provide a Necessary Universe theory. When considering the concept of a triangle from the laws of logic, one can deduce that all triangles will have 3 sides. But one can never deduce there exists some individual triangle at some particular space and time. From formal necessities all one can deduce are other formal necessities; never the contingent or the individual thing. Formal necessities are like superhighways with no exit ramps; one can speed back and forth on them, but one can never get off.⁹⁸ The law of contradiction shows that certain things could not exist. From the concept of an object's logical possibility, one cannot say something exists (except for God). Therefore, the existence of formal necessities and the universe in whatever form it takes will still be brute facts. All of the various forms of the Necessary Universe theory, when faced with providing an account for the existence of the particular entities which do exist, collapse into Brute Fact. As Van Til writes:

The non-Christian claims that his position is logical but cannot put any intelligible meaning into the claim. If he works according to his presupposition about the ultimate non-rationality of fact, then all logic operates in a void. It has no contact with the world. If he works according to his presuppositions of the ultimacy of all facts, then all facts are reduced to logic and thereby destroyed because they lose their individuality; logic has a validity that is, therefore, purely formal.⁹⁹

As the Necessary Universe theory cannot explain the existence of the universe and the things in it, one is left with brute facts. And as we have seen, brute fact is utterly unintelligible. Therefore, it is a necessary presupposition of all thought and justification that Necessary Universe theory is false, whether this is formally acknowledged or not, just as it is for Brute Fact theory.

CHAPTER 10

NECESSARY DEITY

Brute Fact and Necessary Universe theories are untenable. The Brute Fact theory is unable to account for the rationality, orderliness and lawful behavior of the universe and the things in it; while the Necessary Universe theory is unable to account for the contingency and particularity of the universe and the things in it. Stanley Jaki writes:

The contingency of the universe obviates an a priori discourse about it, which its rationality makes is accessible to the mind though only in an a posteriori manner. Hence the need for empirical investigations. The contingency of the universe as a whole serves in turn as a pointer to an ultimate in intelligibility which though outside the universe in a metaphysical sense, is within the referential power of man's intellect.¹

Not only are the Brute Fact and Necessary Universe theories unable to account for the universe as it is, they are unable to provide the basis for knowledge. With Brute Fact everything that happens is ultimately by chance, and is therefore irrational and unintelligible. In the Necessary Universe theory, on the other hand, an impersonal abstract necessity is the reason for the existence of everything, and cannot account for the existence of any concrete entity. As only three alternatives exist to account for the existence of the universe and the things in it, the last one, Necessary Deity must now be investigated. What is contained in the concept necessary being? To quote William Barrett, "[A]s in the case of the atheist, the believer has to recognize the intellectual audacity of the step he has taken. What is this necessary being? Do we have an adequate idea of it? We answer a mystery by positing a mystery."²

In chapter four a theistic answer was given to this question. Another concept of the necessary being which might be put forth is that of pantheism or monism; in other words, the Absolute. In the last chapter I provided several reasons for doubting the coherence of the concept of the Absolute. However, the concept of the Absolute in this chapter is somewhat different than the concept presented in the last.

There, the universe was thought to be part of the Absolute. Here, the notion that the universe is an emanation of the Absolute, that is, it necessarily flows from the Absolute but is not part of it, will be examined. This new concept of the Absolute is close enough to the concept presented in chapter nine to permit the application of some of the same criticisms, yet distinct enough to allow emanational Absolutism to be thought of as a version of the Necessary Deity theory, and thus merit its own investigation.

The major difference between the two concepts of the necessary being is that in the theistic theory the deity is thought to be personal, while in the monistic theory the deity is thought to be impersonal. While there are other differences, this is the crucial one. Any concept of the deity which conceives it to be personal is by definition theistic, while the monistic deity must be thought of as being impersonal.

On the monistic view the universe is produced mechanically, that is, mindlessly and without choice. The Absolute necessarily produces this universe. Based on the supposition that the Absolute and the properties it has are a necessity, it would seem this is the only possible world which exists. If the Absolute emanates necessarily, then what it produces will be necessary. Freedom of will does not exist in any sense, for there is no will in the impersonal, no recognition of alternatives and no ability to purposefully choose of one of them. There is only mechanical production.

The situation is quite different in the theistic version of the Necessary Deity theory. In this model the deity is personal and a person has knowledge and choice. Thus in the theistic model, the deity would have knowledge of the different possible worlds which he could create and the ability to choose which one is actualized. The necessary being, who is free from any external pressure, could choose to create a world on the basis of his own (necessary) values. Many possible worlds might exist which embody the values of the necessary being, or only one such world might exist. The basic point is there are all sorts of possible worlds which are within the necessary being's power to create. There would also be worlds the necessary being would never wish to create. To use Thomistic jargon, the worlds would lie within his power to create but not his wisdom. In the personal version of the Necessary Deity theory, the reason this world exists rather than some other lies in the necessary deity's values and desires.

In the theistic model the reason for the creation of the universe is axiological. In the monistic version, it is mechanical. It will be demonstrated that the concept of being personal, besides distinguishing the two versions, also provides the key to determining the truth about the existence of God.

What is the Absolute or One supposed to be like? In the words of Plotinus:

What then is the One? What is its nature? . . . The One, then, is not The Intelligence but higher. The Intelligence is still a being, while the One is not a being because it is precedent to all being. Being has, you might say, the form of being; The One is without form, even intelligible form.

As the One begets all things, it cannot be any of them—neither thing, nor quality, nor

quantity, nor intelligence, nor soul. Not in motion, nor at rest, not in space, nor in time, it is 'the in itself uniform', or rather it is the 'with-out-form' preceding form, movement, and rest, which are characteristics of Being and make Being multiple.³

A personal God, by definition, has knowledge, will, values and desires; all of the things which make something a person. Assuming the personal God fits the description given of the GPB, he can know the different possible worlds and choose to actualize one of them in accordance with his values and desires. The possible worlds would exist in the mind of God as objects of knowledge. The Absolute or One, on the other hand, being impersonal has no mind, and therefore no knowledge, no will, no values and no desires. As the Absolute or One couldn't know anything, possible worlds couldn't exist in it as objects of knowledge. Anything produced by the Absolute would be produced out of its own inner necessity or internal principles. In the previous chapter the problem of a complex world of changing contingent particulars arising from an absolutely simple non-differentiated Oneness was examined.⁴ In addition to this there is the problem of how a necessary but impersonal being could produce anything contingent.

Suppose the laws of the universe are contingentP, as indeed, intuitively they seem to be. The Absolute, being impersonal and having no knowledge or choice, necessarily produced any laws which exist, just as an equation necessarily produces an answer. As whatever the Absolute produces should be as necessary as the Absolute itself, the natural laws which exist must be necessary. But as seen in the preceding chapter, this seems impossible. While the laws of logic are necessary, it seems that Natural laws are necessarily contingent. Assume for a moment that the concept of material body necessarily contains the concept of attraction to other material bodies, so that material bodies necessarily attract each other.⁵ Even with this assumption, a specific strength of attraction would have to be given and therefore be contingentP. The denial of any specific strength of attraction does not entail a contradiction and thus all strengths are contingentP, that is, contingent in the sense they could have been other than they are. But an impersonal necessary being, which necessarily produces whatever it does produce, could not necessarily produce a contingentP law, for there would be no reason to produce one law over another. A purely mechanical necessary being could not choose to produce one contingentP law rather than another, for everything it does must be necessary.

The only way one could avoid the force of this argument is to state the laws of nature are necessary and the contradiction entailed by denying them lies in the Absolute rather than the universe. Unfortunately, this argument is unsound for several reasons. First, by supposition the Absolute has no properties, thus the premise that the contradiction lies in the properties of the Absolute is impossible. Second, the laws of nature are specific, that is, they have one value rather than some other. In the example about the law of attraction the force of the attraction might have a value of *X*. If this value were produced necessarily by the Absolute, then the Absolute must have some property correlative to that specific value which itself must have some specific value. Let us call the value of this correlative value within

the Absolute X' . This however is contrary to the Absolute's presupposed characteristics. If this example were true, the Absolute would contain one specific value rather than some other. And this leads to the question of why that specific value? Why X' rather than X' plus 1 or X' minus 1? Any specific value is contingent by nature in the sense that there is no reason for it to be instantiated rather than some other specific value. Thus, to give the Absolute a value correlative to some contingent value outside the Absolute introduces both contingency and brute fact into the concept of the Absolute.

The Absolute is supposed to contain only one abstract impersonal principle. But even if this is overlooked, how can abstract principles necessarily create objects with specific properties? Is there some abstract principle which entails each of my three daughters, Sarah, Rebekah and Mary have the exact number of molecules in their bodies that they have? The question is absurd. Matters such as these are inherently contingent. They are feasible in different possible worlds and are knowable by a personal God. They are not logically necessary principles possessed by the impersonal Absolute. The Absolute fails to provide any basis for the universe as it is. The actual entities and relations in the universe cannot be derived from an abstract principle. But if there is nothing more than this principle to account for the universe, then the universe exists as it is by brute fact. And we have already seen that the Brute Fact theory is impossible.

It has been suggested that the existence of some other kind of entity, like a giant or infinite computer, could serve as an alternative to the Absolute and the GPB.⁶ If the concept of a computer were taken literally, a machine of infinite size, composed of an infinite number of chips, wires, etc., would have to be imagined. Could this be a necessary being? For reasons already given, the answer is no. For one thing a computer could be destroyed, or damaged, or corrupted by a computer virus with infinite extent. As a computer is limited in various ways, it could not cope with every possible danger in every possible world. Further, the computer, in its being and its action, is dependent on the laws of the universe in which it exists. As it cannot control these laws, it is therefore at the mercy of them. And what about the possible worlds where the laws do not permit the functioning of a computer? For all these reasons, the computer could not be a necessary being. The same is true for any finite spiritual being, for by nature a finite being is limited, not omnipotent, omniscient or omnipresent, and thus could not control the laws of every possible world.

If the concept of the computer were taken metaphorically, then an infinite spiritual being would have to be conceivable. But what would an infinite spiritual being be like? The only models that have been proposed have been the theistic model of the GPB and the pantheistic model of the Absolute. And it has already been proven that the concept of the Absolute is hopelessly inadequate. It is impossible to imagine another kind of being that would be spiritual, infinite and also avoid the problems with individuality and contingency. As any impersonal being is unable to account for the existence of the universe as it is, the being must be personal. But an infinite personal spiritual being is the GPB.

There is one last concept of God which must be considered; that of process theology. Process thought has deep philosophical roots, but its mature form took shape primarily under the guidance of Alfred North Whitehead. Besides Whitehead, the philosopher who has done the most to develop and defend the process view of the world is Charles Hartshorne. In some ways Hartshorne is the more influential figure. As Lewis Ford writes, "Hartshorne's clarity of presentation and argument, coupled with a freedom from Whitehead's neologisms, has made his a most influential exponent of process thought, and many read their Whitehead through Hartshorne's spectacles."⁷ For this reason and others⁸ my investigation will concentrate primarily on Hartshorne and his followers rather than Whitehead.⁹

The essence of the process view of reality can perhaps be summed up as giving priority to becoming over being. As Nancy Frankenberry writes:

Process philosophy's preference for the category of 'becoming' over 'being' is in no way arbitrary. Only becoming, Hartshorne argues, can be taken as inclusive of the contrast between being and becoming, without losing the contrast between them. Philosophies of being, on the other hand, are simply not capable of deriving the idea of becoming from the idea of being, not even through dialectical negation.¹⁰

What is the process concept of God? In essence, Hartshorne posits a *dipolar* account of the deity. In this account, God allegedly has two different poles with two different natures. As Hartshorne writes:

The main thesis, called Surrelativism, also Panentheism, is that the 'relative' or changeable, that which depends upon and varies with varying relationships, includes within itself and in value exceeds the non-relative, immutable, independent, or 'absolute', *as the concrete includes and exceeds the abstract*. From this doctrine, . . . it follows that God, as supremely excellent and concrete, must be conceived not as wholly absolute or immutable, but rather as supremely-relative, 'surrelative', although, or because of his superior relativity, containing an abstract character or essence in respect to which, but only in respect to which, he is indeed strictly absolute and immutable.¹¹

God has two radically different poles both of which are integral parts of his being. William Watkins, a critic of process theology, states, "One pole is often called his primordial, absolute, potential, infinite, or abstract nature. The other pole is often referred to as his consequent, relative, actual, finite, or concrete nature."¹² This means God has as his concrete pole or nature the universe, while the other pole is an abstraction. For Hartshorne God is all-inclusive and has no external environment.¹³ Thus God's concrete pole has to be, by definition concrete, and as there is nothing external to God, the universe, which is the totality of the concrete, must be God. God's other pole, which is absolute, immutable and abstract is in fact merely an abstraction contained in the concrete pole. Hence, God is the universe and everything that exists is part of God.

While this sounds like pantheism, as quoted above, a better term for it is

panentheism. For although in Hartshorne's opinion the universe is part of God, God is more than the universe. God is a consciousness which contains the whole universe. As Watkins states, "God is related to the world as containing it in himself. He is the all-inclusive One, embracing the contingent world in his experience."¹⁴ Or, as William Reese explains, "[T]he universe is the body of God."¹⁵ However the image of God standing next to the world as a Cartesian soul does to its body, is misleading. Hartshorne rejects any kind of dualism, opposing to it the doctrine of psychicalism.¹⁶ What is psychicalism? In essence it is a doctrine wherein everything that exists is both physical and psychical; everything has physical and mental properties. Hartshorne maintains that even the most elementary particles have these mental properties. When using the term mental properties Hartshorne primarily means feeling. He writes, "I do not in the same sense attribute mind or psychological qualities to everything; for instance to stones, or even to trees, but only to what I call the 'dynamic singulars' of which stones and trees are the groupings or collectives."¹⁷ He also writes, "The analogy applies to single-celled animals and plants and to animal and plant cells, but probably not to multicellular plants, and surely not to mountains. Psychicalism extends it below cells to molecules, atoms, and particles, but not to crystals."¹⁸

In this model, a human consciousness is collectively all the lesser consciousness' of the body. People are made up of 'societies', collections of dynamic singulars. As Watkin's relates about Hartshorne's theory of personality, "A person is a linear society of actual occasions which includes a complex bodily society of actual entities. A person cannot exist bodiless and no body is without personality."¹⁹ Hartshorne believes there is no substantial self, instead the person changes over time in conjunction with changes in the person's collection of dynamic singulars. According to Watkins, "Any person is identical in the sense that his past experiences are unchanging and will always be his. But a person is nonidentical in the sense that each new moment he has new experiences, hence becomes a new self or whole each moment. . . ."²⁰

Hartshorne's theory of human persons is directly related to his theory of God. For him, a human being is necessarily a collection of dynamic singulars contained within a body which are ever changing and forever having experiences. In short, our minds are the totality of the lesser experiences in our bodies. Similarly, God is the totality of all the experiences of all entities in the universe. As Hartshorne states:

The divine personality is concretely and in part each new moment, and each new divine self sympathizes with its predecessors and its (in outline) anticipated successors. It is even true that these persons in God are immutable (though not eternal or ungenerated) for, as events, once they occur they are immortally in the life of God. But each self is superior to all its predecessors, except in the abstract or *A* [absolute] factor (which includes the requirement that there shall always be an *R* [relative] factor, a new state of self-transcendence, but includes no such state in particular), this factor being identical in all.²¹

Hartshorne believes God is constantly changing, therefore he is not transcendent. Indeed, for Hartshorne both humans and God are not enduring entities. Rather we are both a stream of connected entities, collections of dynamic singulars. God, according to process theology, remembers all of his experiences and incorporates them into his being. Thus, God is ever changing and growing as he experiences new events.

Hartshorne rejects any deterministic theories and embraces the view that everything which happens is indeterminate, although subject to law. As Robert H. Kane states, "Hartshorne has attempted to refute traditional arguments for determinism and has also argued on theological and metaphysical grounds that determinism must be false."²² Hartshorne believes this strong indeterminism has several implications, the first of which is that God does not control the course of events, he only influences them. Another is that God is unable to know what will happen in the future.²³ Perhaps the most important property of God that Hartshorne sees as being different from classical theism is that of power. Although Hartshorne believes God has the highest degree of power anyone could possibly have, his is not the traditional view of God's omnipotence. John Cobb writes:

Those whose view of power has been shaped in relation to the mechanistic vision complain that Hartshorne does not credit God with sufficient power. God does not move objects around by fiat. God does not bring things into being or destroy them except in collaboration with other powers. Indeed, God does not strictly determine what any entity will be.²⁴

This view is succinctly stated by Hartshorne who says, "His [God's] power is absolute, if that means absolute in adequacy, or such that greater power would be no more adequate, and therefore would not really be 'greater'-since adequacy is the measure of greatness, on our theory."²⁵ He also states, "For God to do what I do, when I decide my own act, determine my own concrete being, is mere nonsense, words without meaning."²⁶

The main outlines of Hartshorne's theology should be fairly clear by now. He believes in a dipolar God, of which one pole sounds like the classical concept of God. However, for Hartshorne this is a mere abstraction. God's other pole is real and concrete and considered to be the universe. Because Hartshorne is a psychicalist, he views God's relation to the universe analogously with the relation, based on physicalist theory, of a human mind to a human brain. For Hartshorne, all entities at their most basic level are conscious, and God is that being which experiences all of the experiences of all the entities in the universe. He is in effect the universal mind. He is supremely mutable in his concrete pole, ever changing and growing as he experiences new things. He is limited in power as he is unable to create or destroy things *ex nihilo*. His power works by influencing, rather than controlling and determining events and entities.

From the above, one might conclude that in the process view the concrete pole of God is contingent. But this would be a mistake. Hartshorne strongly defends the

necessity of God's existence. This belief is tied to Hartshorne's reasons for believing in the existence of his God. Although Hartshorne defends several arguments for the existence of God, he is most famous for his defense of the ontological argument. In fact, he was largely responsible for reviving interest in this argument in the twentieth century.²⁷ This may seem surprising, for if the arguments in the fourth chapter have any soundness, then the God the ontological argument establishes is an infinite, unchanging being, which is the GPB, the greatest possible being.

Hartshorne's response to this is an admission that God is indeed the greatest possible being and cannot possibly be surpassed by any other being. He can however, surpass himself. Which is to say that God at any time *T*, will be greater at some later time *T'*. As Hartshorne writes:

As I have been trying to explain for many years, perfection has two aspects, the absolute aspect *A*, which cannot be surpassed in any way whatever, and the transcendently relative aspect, or the aspect of transcendent relativity, *R*, which is surpassable only by the perfect itself, not by any other individual. Or better, and positively: as *A*, God surpasses all things save only Himself; as *R*, he surpasses all things, including Himself.²⁸

Next Hartshorne considers an objection brought up in this book, "It may seem that a contingent state of divinity could not be 'such that none greater can be conceived', hence it could not exemplify perfection."²⁹ His response is, "[T]he states exemplify perfection by being such that the individual possessing them is thereby made such that no other individual could conceivably be greater."³⁰ Regarding the absolute aspect of God's unsurpassability Hartshorne states, "[W]hat is eternally fixed or absolute in God is exactly the unlimited flexibility of His capacity to know and value, and thus to relativize Himself. He is immutably capable, to an ideal degree and in an ideal manner, of self-enrichment through anything that may become real."³¹

For Hartshorne, God is both necessary and contingent, both absolute and relative. He is necessary in his abstract pole, and contingent in his concrete pole so that he could have been other than he is. For Hartshorne the universe is necessarily indeterminate, and as God can only influence the universe, not control it, things could have been radically different than they are. Hartshorne maintains there exists in every possible world some universe, which is the body of God so to speak, and in which God is constantly experiencing all the experiences of all the creatures in the universe. Further, no other being exists who is greater than God. God is constantly surpassing himself because his memory of past experiences is ever growing, but no other being could ever, in any possible world, surpass God. Everything else which exists is necessarily a part of God and contributes to God's unsurpassability.

Although Hartshorne's God is in some sense finite, and thus by the definition used in this work, less than the greatest possible being, Hartshorne believes his God is

the greatest possible being. He believes his conception of God is greater than the concept of God presented in classical theism. For him the God of classical theism is static; unable to be involved in relationships and unable to learn or experience anything new. But Hartshorne's God can do all of these things. Hartshorne believes it is better for God and the universe to be codependent, as in process theology, rather than for God to be independent and the universe dependent, as in classical theology. Typically process theologians, including Hartshorne, believe persuasion is better than power; it is better for God to try and persuade the other entities which exist to act in a particular manner rather than to force them. Thus, Hartshorne thinks his process or neo-classical view of God is morally superior to classical theism. Although his notion of God is radically different than the classical notion, he still holds to perfect being theology.³²

There is a certain amount of subjectivity in the notion of the perfect being. Classical theists have said in order to be perfect God must be independent, while process theists think perfection is based on God's dependence upon the universe. Classical theists believe the perfect God must be omniscient and omnipotent. Process theists believe the perfect God must not know the future and be limited in his powers. Plantinga thinks the ontological argument shows the existence of classical theism's God, while Hartshorne thinks the ontological argument shows the existence of process theism's God. Is there any objective way to decide this matter? In my opinion there is. The process involves deciding which concept coherently supports God as a necessary being. First however, a few less important, but still telling, critiques against the process notion of God must be examined.

The first of these is that the God of process theology has serious problems with the theory of relativity. As Royce Gordon Gruenler writes:

Charles Hartshorne has argued that God is "a perfect mind, a mind co-extensive with existence and thus omniscient"... The problem with this doctrine in view of the first is that if God is processive in space-time he must move at the speed of light (C)-the approximate velocity of 186,000 miles per second. But then he could not be coextensive with existence, for light from distant sources would take millions of light years to reach any kind of coordination in his cosmic mind with light from other sources in different segments of the universe (depending, of course, on God's frame of reference-the other question). If, as Hartshorne suggests, the total physical universe comprises God's brain cells, then (by analogy of the delay rate that occurs in the human body between the injury of the finger, the subsequent registration of hurt in the brain, and the resultant conscious coordination of this feeling with all other feelings in the body) one can only conclude that God, moving at the speed of light, could have a coordinated and unified experience of the whole universe, perhaps only once in an entire universal cycle.³³

Put another way, Hartshorne believes the universe is God's body. Thus, in a very real sense, God is the universe, and does not transcend it (except abstractly). God is therefore limited by the restrictions of the laws of the universe, including the speed at which light moves. But at the same time, God is supposed to be a unitary

consciousness which is the synthesis of all the lesser consciousness' in the universe. In order for this to happen, God must have immediate access to all of these lesser consciousness', but the laws of physics do not allow this. According to relativity, no universal frame of reference from which to judge the universe and the motion of things within it exists.³⁴ There are as many frames of reference as there are parts of space-time, and all are of equal validity. Therefore, no one supreme frame of reference which is the 'real' one and which God would occupy exists.

In order for God to be a unitary consciousness, his consciousness would have to be localized at some particular space and time. As frames of reference are localized to different places in space and time, this seems absurd. For example, to say God's consciousness is localized in Cleveland would change God from being the mind of the universe to the mind of one particular place in it. The next problem, as mentioned above, deals with the finitude of the speed of light. As God in his concrete pole is totally immanentized in the universe, he is limited by the laws which govern the universe, particularly the speed of light. Consequently, God would be unable to know what is happening in other parts of the universe until billions of years after they happen. Similarly, his influence would only be known billions of years after sending a signal. With God being this far removed from current events, it is difficult to see how he could influence the universe. In addition, if God is limited to acting at the speed of light, how could he sustain the laws which govern the universe? As Gruenler writes, "How, then, could God be the universal orderer who sustains the order of laws throughout the universe, including the speed of light itself, yet himself be limited to the speed of light? Similarly, how could he act a immediate lure to every finite creature if he himself were processing at a finite rate?"³⁵

Hartshorne recognizes his neo-classical thought has a very real problem with the theory of relativity. He writes, "One is . . . even *the* problem, for me: how God as prehending, caring for, sensitive to the creatures is to be conceived, given the current non-Newtonian idea of physical relativity, according to which there is apparently no unique cosmic present or unambiguous simultaneity."³⁶

Although I don't agree this is Hartshorne's *main* problem, I do agree it is a difficult one. As Gruenler states, "The God of simultaneous experience and omnipresent relevance must, by definition, be a Being who is supratemporal and supraspatial."³⁷ In other words, such a God must be transcendent.

This is not the only problem facing process theology. Big Bang cosmology and the second law of thermodynamics both state the universe began a finite time ago. Big Bang cosmology states the universe began in a state of infinite density and then exploded outward. The second law of thermodynamics states the universe's amount of usable energy is constantly running down. In Big Bang cosmology God had a beginning, which is contrary to process theology, and as William Lane Craig writes, "To try to wed process theology with modern cosmology can only make us smile at the incongruity: A pitiable God, indeed, whose poor body explodes from a state of infinite density and perishes in the cold recesses of outer space!"³⁸ The second law of thermodynamics implies that time had a beginning and the concept that at

some point in the future there will be no usable energy, at which point the process God will be dead. Process theology is incompatible with modern cosmology.

As Hartshorne construes process theology, God is a logically necessary being. He exists in every possible world, although the properties he possesses in his concrete pole differ significantly in some worlds from those of the actual world. This is because the universe is God's body and the universe changes in the actual world, and because of the genuine indeterminacy of the events within the universe. The universe itself is wholly contingentP. But if this is true, how can God be necessary? The concrete pole of God, which is God's real existence, is completely contingent. That is, every entity which exists in the universe is contingent in the sense that it might not have been. None of these entities have the reason for their existence in themselves. If this is true, then it could have been logically possible for none of them to exist at all. In this case God himself would not exist in that world, and hence would not be logically necessary.

There are two responses Hartshorne might make to this argument. First, he might claim this argument commits the fallacy of composition. I have already dealt with this in chapter five, but due to its importance in this discussion I will briefly restate my argument. Legitimate movement from a things parts to its whole is not always possible. If all the parts of which an object is composed are round, it does not necessarily mean the object as a whole must be round. If, on the other hand, all the parts of which an object is composed are made of wood, then the object as a whole will be made of wood. By supposition, all the entities which exist within the universe exist for reasons external to themselves. In this case it is impossible to see how the universe as a whole could exist out of its own inner necessity for nowhere would there be, in any part of the universe, any entities which existed for reasons internal to themselves. And the universe is nothing over and above the sum of its parts. If the universe is the set of all the objects which exist within it, then the relation can be symbolized as follows. Let U stand for the universe and $a, b, c, \dots n$ stand for the set of all entities in it. In this case, U is $a, b, c, \dots n$. If this set of entities is entirely composed of members that are contingentP, that is, members who have the reason for their existence external to themselves, then one can non-contradictorily imagine the set consisting of $a, b, d, \dots n$ only. Indeed, one could keep removing members until they were all gone and the set was empty. At no point in the process is there any factor which would make the process contradictory and thus impossible. If this argument is sound, there is no coherent way for all the members of the set to be contingentP, while U as a whole is necessary. Hartshorne cannot coherently maintain that God's concrete pole is the universe which is necessary, and at the same time maintain that all the entities which compose the universe are contingentP.

The second response Hartshorne might make is that God is self-caused.³⁹ This stance is self contradictory, as has already been pointed out.⁴⁰ On the other hand, if the stance that things are not caused by anything is taken, then the Brute Fact theory comes into play. If the existence of the universe, and therefore of God's concrete pole is a brute fact, then instead of God causing himself to exist, he would

exist without a cause. Again, the notion of a necessary being who exists for no reason is contradictory. In process thought the main problem lies in the rationale that God *is*, in his concrete pole, the universe. And not being transcendent, save for the abstract pole, God is tied to all the limitations of the universe.

It might be asked if God in his abstract pole could provide the explanation for the existence of God's concrete pole. Per Hartshorne the properties of God's abstract or primordial pole are: infinite, absolute, necessary, eternal, transcendent, along with many others.⁴¹ The problem with this lies in the fact that the abstract pole is abstract. Indeed, the primordial pole is an abstraction of God's concrete nature. Thus, the abstract pole depends upon the concrete pole, and not the other way around. The abstract pole cannot cause the concrete pole. Again, how could an abstraction of an infinite God be the cause of a specific finite God? There is no logical connection, leaving the finite God's existence a brute fact.

Another possible justification Hartshorne might use can be found in his defense of the ontological argument. Hartshorne argues the ontological argument proves God must necessarily exist. There are however, a number of problems with this approach. Grant for the sake of argument that the ontological argument does prove, or at least gives one good reason to think, that the greatest possible being exists. In my opinion the God of classical theism is greater than the God of neo-classical theism, but I admit to a certain element of subjectivity. There is, however, another way to proceed.

Let us contrast the rival conceptions of God. In classical theism God is omnipotent, while in neo-classical theism God has a quite limited amount of power. In classical theism God knows all propositions, while in neo-classical theism God does not know all propositions. In these examples, the classical God clearly seems greater than the neo-classical God. Hartshorne would reply his God is greater because of other factors, such as being able to relate to creatures in a way the classical God cannot. To judge, let us once again examine what it means to be a necessary being. To be a necessary being one must be indestructible and unpreventable.

The God of classical theism meets these requirements. As he is not only omnipotent but sovereign in every possible world, nothing could possibly exist which would prevent or destroy him. But this is not the case with the God of neo-classical theism. For whatever amount of power he has is finite, and it is possible to non-contradictorily imagine a being with a greater amount of power who could prevent or destroy him. Hartshorne's response to this is that while God can surpass himself, and indeed constantly surpasses himself, no other being can. This argument lacks persuasiveness. For example, let us suppose at some time *T1* God possesses *G1* amount of greatness, and later at time *T2*, God possesses *G2* amount of greatness, which is greater than *G1*. This being the case, why is it logically impossible for some other being to exist who possesses at time *T1* *G2* amount of greatness (which is more than the amount God would possess)? Why couldn't there be some other God with a universe body which is greater than the universe body of our God (bigger, better organized, with more intelligent, better looking creatures

inhabiting it, etc.)? Further, why couldn't there be a more powerful universe with an evil intended God, who destroys the universe our neo-classical God uses as a body? I see no logical reason why these different scenarios could not be possible, and if possible, then the neo-classical God is not the greatest possible being, and the ontological argument is not applicable.

The same is true with the inner logic of the ontological argument. The premise of this logic maintains the greatest possible being exists because he has all perfections, and has them in all possible worlds. This logic cannot be used on the neo-classical God as he is lacking in perfections. For example, as the course of the universe's history is genuinely indeterminate, the universe could have turned out better than it has. So there are possible worlds where the universe, and thus the neo-classical God, are greater than they are in the actual world. The logic of the ontological argument, that necessarily no greater being can exist, is inapplicable. The concept of the greatest possible being maintains there is only one being with perfection or maximal greatness; there is no logical connection between the concept of a perfect or greatest possible being and that of some great but limited being. Further, some of the attributes of the neo-classical God do not have maximal states. The God of classical theism, the GPB, has properties with maximal states. For example he has omniscience (knowledge of everything) and omnipotence (maximal power or the power to do anything possible). Hence, it is analytic to the concept of the GPB for him to be omniscient and omnipotent.

The process God does not have these properties, he is limited in both power and knowledge. There are possible worlds where he has more or less power and knowledge than he does in the actual world. If this is true, and it follows analytically from the concept of the neo-classical God, then the ontological argument cannot be used to argue for this God. For if God does not have all relevant perfections, then he does not have necessary existence. The reason the GPB, or classical God, exists in all possible worlds is that he has all relevant perfections, including sovereignty and others which entail existence in all possible worlds. But to lack any relevant perfection would mean the neo-classical God could not exist in all possible worlds. Indeed, by the very definition of the concept of the neo-classical God he is *not* perfect. This means that he is not sovereign in all possible worlds, indeed, by definition, he is not sovereign in any possible world.

Finally, by basing an allegedly necessary God on a universe of brute fact, Hartshorne opens himself up to all of the problems associated with the Brute Fact position. According to process theology, God's body is made of many discrete events and entities that have a physical and psychical side to them. God's mind is supposed to include a collection of all the psychic events of the entities in the universe. But why is it necessarily true that God is aware of all the experiences on Pluto? How can God ensure he has a steady flow of accurate information from Pluto? By the very nature of reality in the process viewpoint, every event is partly determined by chance. Thus God is dependent for his knowledge upon receiving information from the entities and events themselves. But in process theology, God does not exist over and above the entities and events which make up his body. God

is, in every part of his concrete pole, dependent upon the very entities and events of which he is composed. He has no power over and above the universe which he could use to control things. In short, he must use the very things he is attempting to control in order to control them, and this is an impossibility.

The above is not a problem for the classical theist as his God exists transcendent to the universe. This God could create any set of laws he desired, as long as they were consistent, to create the kind of universe he desired. But things are radically different with the God of neo-classical theology. He cannot choose the basic laws which govern the universe because he himself is the universe. To ensure God's ability to control all of his 'parts', God would need some set of powers *P*. But how and why would he have *P*? There are only three scenarios which would allow God to have *P*:

(10.1) He could have *P* intrinsic to himself. The problem with this is to do so, *P* would have to be analytic to the process God. Yet there is no contradiction in thinking God could exist with the universe as his body, and yet not have control over all of his parts. That is, it is necessary only in the De Dicto sense to say that the process God have control over the universe. Of course if one defines the process God as having a certain amount of control over the universe, then it is analytic to him that he does. But the real question is De Re. That is, is it possible to have a God that is in some respects like the process God-being a mind that has the universe for a body-and non-contradictorily think of this God losing control over part of the universe. It clearly seems possible. Thus, he cannot have *P* intrinsic to himself.

(10.2) He could receive *P* from something external. But this is impossible, for there are in process thought no concrete entities external to God's body, while the abstract pole of God, is as we have seen, powerless to cause the concrete pole to have anything.

(10.3) He could have *P* by chance, that is, without a cause. But in this case, he has no control over having *P*, and therefore cannot ensure that he really does have control over his body.

Looked at from another angle, God cannot cause himself to have *P*. For to do so he would have to have some power *P'*. But then the same question arises, why does he have *P'*? God must eventually either have some power necessarily, or merely have some power by chance. But according to the process view, God in his concrete pole is the universe, and receives any powers he has from it. So *P*, the power to control the universe would actually be the power to control himself. And God cannot, without already having control over himself, give himself the power to control himself. Consequently, the question as to why he has this power is left unanswered. God would have to be sovereign in order to have control in every situation. A God who is anything less than sovereign is susceptible to factors which could destroy or cripple him. Yet by definition, the process God is not sovereign, any powers or other properties he has, he has by chance. Thus, the process God ends up becoming a brute fact and is plagued by all of the problems which go along

with this position.

The concept of the GPB provides logical reasoning for the necessary existence of God and can account for the contingency and particularity of the universe. Nonetheless, several areas of concern must be considered.⁴² Although I have stated the concept of the GPB can account for the contingency of the world, others have questioned this, and it therefore behooves us to investigate their claims. Paul Davies gives a brief summary of the problem:

It appears as if creation *ex nihilo* resolves the paradox of how a changing, contingent world can be explained by a timeless necessary being. Unfortunately, in spite of the attention of generations of philosophers and theologians to develop the idea into a coherent scheme, major obstacles remain. The chief one is to understand why God chose to create this particular world rather than some other. When human beings choose freely, their choice is colored by their nature. So what can be said about God's nature? Presumably that it is fixed by his necessity. . . . But if God's nature is fixed by his necessity, could he have chosen to create a different universe? Only if his choice was not rational at all, but whimsical, the theistic equivalent of tossing a coin. But in that case existence is arbitrary, and we might as well be content with an arbitrary universe and leave it at that.⁴³

I have emphasized the superiority of the concept of the GPB partly because the GPB is *personal*. Analytic to the concept of 'being a person' is the concept of having a will. Most people would say that the will must be in some sense free. The GPB, by definition, is the highest being, independent of all other things, and therefore must have free will. There are however, two basic theories of free will, the compatibilist and incompatibilist. Compatibilism is inherently deterministic, while incompatibilism is inherently indeterministic.

In compatibilism free will is considered to be something which is congruous with determinism. That is, one could say Smith has free will while everything Smith does is predictable in principle, if one knew everything about Smith and his environment. In compatibilism free will is acting in accordance with one's beliefs, desires and values; not being forced to act in a certain manner by external forces. According to incompatibilism, if Jones has free will then by definition her actions cannot be predicted with certainty before they happen, even if one knew Jones and her environment perfectly. This is because in indeterminism, the casual conditions for some act of free will could be identical while the action could be significantly different. In incompatibilism free will is indeterministic, it has the ability to go more than one way under exactly the same conditions. Thus, compatibilism and incompatibilism are at odds over the very meaning of what it is to have free will. I will for the sake of argument assume that both the compatibilist and incompatibilist theories are legitimate theories of free will.

There are in fact four possibilities here, given that God and human beings (and any other rational creatures, like angels and Klingons), have some sort of free will. First, is the possibility that both God and rational creatures have incompatibilist free will. Second, is the possibility that God has compatibilist free will while rational

creatures have incompatibilist free will. Third, is the possibility that God has incompatibilist free will while rational creatures have compatibilist free will, and fourth that both God and rational creatures have incompatibilist free will.

In the case of both God and creatures having compatibilist free will, it seems this is the only possible world God would create. If in compatibilism a person's actions, even God's actions, are totally predictable given a perfect knowledge of their nature and environment, then one could predict God's actions. Therefore, God would always act in one way, which would include the instantiation of this particular possible world. And as all the creatures in this world would, by supposition have compatibilist free will, they would always act in a determinate manner, so nothing would happen to cause the existence of different worlds. Thus, the universe would be a secondary necessary being.

If the universe is a secondary necessary being, then why does it seem to be contingent? In this scenario the necessity for the universe does not lie within the universe itself, but rather in the mind of God, with his values and desires. God, being the way he necessarily is, would want to create this world, and no other. There are two reasons which explain why the universe appears to be contingent^P instead of necessary.

First, according to supposition, the actual world is the only possible world, that is, nothing could have been different than it actually is. But even in this case a distinction can be made between impossible worlds. The distinction lies between those worlds God could not create, and those he could create but would never want to. As an example of the first situation, imagine a world where round squares are common or a world where everyone is taller than themselves. Examples of the second situation, worlds God could create but would choose not to, are worlds where evil would be triumphant in the universe or worlds which were so ugly or boring there would be no point in creating them. While both kinds of worlds would be impossible in the sense they would never be created, they are impossible for very different reasons. As Leibniz wrote:

[T]hings remain possible, even if God does not choose them. Indeed, even if God *does not will something to exist, it is possible for it to exist, since, by its nature, it could exist if God were to will it to exist.* 'But God cannot will it to exist'. I concede this, yet, such a thing remains possible in its nature, even if it is not possible with respect to the divine will, since we have defined as in its nature possible anything that, in itself, implies no contradiction, even though its coexistence with God can in some way be said to imply a contradiction.⁴⁴

The distinction between impossible worlds which therefore must be made is between that which is contradictory in and of itself and that which is contradictory to the divine will. Thus, one world may be free of contradiction in the first sense but not so in the second.

If God is not considered, a world which would be impossible because it contradicted the divine will, would become possible as it would have no

contradictions internal to the universe. Thus, when God is not considered, these worlds are contingentP. Therefore, in the scenario under examination, the actual world seems to be contingentP because it is contingentP. That is, there are other worlds which could have been the actual world had God willed them to be. And this brings us to the second reason why the world seems to be contingentP. Everything exists in the manner it does because it fulfills some part in the purposes of God. Why, for example, does Sue move to Cleveland? The answer would be because this move somehow furthers God's purposes. However, as God's mind is infinite and no one can see or read the mind of God, his reasons for creating the universe as it is are unknowable.

Some have criticized this concept of God's will. As Spinoza wrote, "So they will pursue their questions from cause to cause, till at last you take refuge in the will of God-in other words, the sanctuary of ignorance."⁴⁵ (In fact in Spinoza's philosophy things are not much different. Everything is still necessary for unknowable reasons.) But the theist does not believe the mind of God is completely open to us. God created the universe because, though not necessarily only because, he values the existence of personal beings. The reason we do not understand the particulars involved flows naturally from the nature of theism. God is personal and has the attributes of omniscience and choice. Therefore, he knows all of the possible worlds he could create and the reason why this one is superior to others. Because we do not know the mind of God, we cannot see the reason. Our ignorance is not an escape, but follows logically from the nature of the position.

The same general statements can be made regarding other positions. The scenarios given provide for different possible worlds, thus no reason exists to question the contingencyP of the universe. In the words of Davies, "If his [God's] choice was not rational at all, but whimsical the theistic equivalent of tossing a coin. But in that case existence is arbitrary, and we might as well be content with an arbitrary universe and leave it at that."⁴⁶ But Davies overlooks two important points. First, in those scenarios where human beings have incompatibilist free will, some of the contingency is caused by actions God thought best to allow, but which are not totally within his control. For example, in the second scenario where God has compatibilist free will and creatures have incompatibilist free will, God could choose a world which would provide the best circumstances for making choices. This would not be arbitrary. Second, and more importantly, even if God had incompatibilist free will, his choice of a universe would not be totally arbitrary. Rather, the set of worlds God would pick would be significantly limited.

The third scenario provides God with incompatibilist free will and creatures with compatibilist free will. In this option God can create any one of a number of worlds. While his choice would be arbitrary in some sense, it would also be limited in that God would never consider creating most possible worlds, e.g., worlds that are chaotic, boring, totally evil, etc. Therefore, none of these worlds could ever exist. This is not true for the Brute Fact theorist, for him all possible worlds are equally viable. Thus Davies is wrong, for even if it is true that God's choice is in some sense arbitrary, it is definitely not arbitrary in Brute Fact theory. In theism,

even if there were a trillion worlds God could 'arbitrarily' choose from, all of them would be ordered.

As charges have been made against the coherence of the concept of God, this last section will deal with the internal coherence of classical theism. The first question which must be asked is, Are there any inconsistencies in the very notion of God that would make his existence impossible? Some, such as Plantinga say no.⁴⁷ This is not however, a universally shared sentiment. In recent years Michael Martin⁴⁸ and Richard Gale⁴⁹ have argued extensively for irreducible contradictions in classical theism. I will examine these alleged contradictions.

Martin argues that several of the properties which are commonly attributed to God lead to incoherence. The first of these properties is omniscience, the notion that God knows everything. Martin arrives at this definition:

(10.4) Person *P* is omniscient = For any true proposition *p*, if *P*'s believing that *p* would increase *P*'s epistemological perfection, then *P* believes *p*; and *P* believes that *p* IFF *P* knows that *p*; and for any piece of knowledge-how *H* that would increase *P*'s epistemological perfection, then *P* has *H* to the highest degree; and for every aspect *A* of every entity *O*, if being directly acquainted with *A* would increase *P*'s epistemological perfection, then *P* is directly acquainted with *A*.⁵⁰

This fairly complex definition was arrived at in order to avoid certain objections, yet Martin believes this fails. It conflicts with God's ability to know the things that human beings know. For example, "If God is omniscient . . . , then he would have all knowledge including that of how to do gymnastic exercises on the parallel bars, and he would have this knowledge to the highest degree."⁵¹ As God is essentially disembodied, there are many things he cannot know, like how to do gymnastic exercises. Martin argues if God has epistemological perfection, then he must know what humans know. And many humans know how to do gymnastic exercises. Martin believes a contradiction exists in that human beings have knowledge of things which God does not, and this is contrary to the above definition of omniscience. In addition, Martin believes omniscience conflicts with God's moral perfection. If God is morally perfect, then he cannot have personal acquaintance with feelings such as envy or lust. Consequently, God does not know all the things we know. Finally, Martin believes God cannot know things because they conflict with his omnipotence. Martin writes, "Since God is omnipotent he cannot experience fear, frustration, and despair."⁵² Thus, contrary to the definition of an omniscient being, there are things God does not and cannot know.

All of these problems with God arise from a particular kind of knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance. Martin writes:

Now philosophers have usually distinguished three kinds of knowledge: propositional and procedural knowledge and knowledge by acquaintance. Briefly, propositional or factual knowledge is knowledge that something is the case and is analyzable as true belief of a certain kind. In contrast, procedural knowledge or knowledge-how is a type of skill and is not reducible to propositional knowledge. Finally, knowledge by

acquaintance is direct acquaintance with some object, person, or phenomenon.⁵³

A response to this is God's knowledge is only propositional. He knows the truth or falsity of all propositions. The only knowledge he has is that which is coherent with his existence and nature. By this I mean that God knows what it is like to create a universe, but does not know what it is like to do gymnastics, or be stood up on a date, or feel despair because he just failed a test. An argument could be made that this proviso guards God's omniscience from weakness and absurdity. Martin however, rejects this. He states, "In the first place, this restriction [to propositional knowledge] has the paradoxical implication that humans have kinds of knowledge that God cannot have. Second, it attributes to God purely intellectual knowledge, and only of a certain kind at that."⁵⁴ Martin believes restricting God's knowledge would mean human beings and other creatures would possess knowledge God does not have, and that the doctrine of God would not coincide with many peoples beliefs about God. Martin writes, "People tend to think that of God as a super-person who has many of the characteristics of ordinary people but to a greater degree. However, one characteristic of ordinary people is that of having knowledge-how and knowledge by acquaintance."⁵⁵ Although this model of God may be logically consistent, Martin believes it suffers from debilitating flaws.

I will respond to each of Martin's objections, in reverse order. First, the premise that the doctrine of God may differ from what 'ordinary' people believe about God is not surprising. Non-philosophers and non-theologians don't spend large amounts of time contemplating the nature of God. The anthropomorphism of the concept of God is not unexpected, as it is easier to think of him that way. Although the intuitions of ordinary people are not to be discounted, they are far from authoritative. This is one of the reasons why people turn to scholars for definitive information. Further, it may be questioned whether Martin's representation of how the ordinary person feels about God is factual. Most of the students in my undergraduate classes on the philosophy of religion accept with little trouble the notion that God does not have the same knowledge by acquaintance we do. In addition, they believe God is really a super-person; basically he is so far above us, he cannot entirely be understood.

Martin's second objection is perhaps more difficult. It is paradoxical for a human being to have more knowledge than God. Imagine God creating a being who is omniscient (knows all propositions), yet as a being who exists within the universe also has some knowledge by acquaintance, e.g., eating ice cream, doing gymnastics, dropping a bowling ball on his foot. Ultimately, God would have created an omniscient being who knows more than he does, and this is impossible.

Even if it were possible for God to create another omniscient being, it could not be better than God. In the model of God I've defended, God knows things because of his nature. It is analytic to God's nature to know all propositions and all propositions necessarily subsist in the mind of God. Thus, no other being could ever understand propositions in the same manner God does. All other beings necessarily understand propositions in a contingent, derived, dependent, creaturely

manner; from the outside as it were. God, on the other hand, understands propositions from the inside, for they are part of his nature. So, in the unlikely event God created another being who had omniscience and the knowledge by acquaintance of having a bowling ball dropped on his foot; God would still be more knowledgeable as the knowledge the being would have would be different. The being's knowledge of propositions would be contingent and looked at from a creaturely point of view.

Thus, this creature would not experience omniscience in the manner God does, and therefore would not have the same knowledge by acquaintance. God knows all propositions and has the knowledge by acquaintance of knowing all propositions in his divine manner, no other being could possibly share this characteristic. To be omniscient in some other manner would mean having the knowledge by acquaintance of being omniscient in a contingent manner. Even if creatures have (as they obviously do) some knowledge by acquaintance which God does not, (e.g., dropping a bowling ball on one's foot) this does not mean they are superior to God. For God necessarily has all of his knowledge by acquaintance in a manner superior to any other possible being. And this is true of all the experience God has as being God, not just his experience of being omniscient. So the objection fails to show creatures could have superior knowledge.

In order to accommodate the notion that God has only propositional knowledge, Martin restates his definition of omniscience. He writes:

(10.5) Person *P* is omniscient = For any true proposition *p*, *P* believes that *p* and believes that *p* IFF *P* knows that *p*.⁵⁶

Martin writes there are three different arguments which show it is logically impossible for God to be omniscient in the sense stated above. First, God's omniscience is inconsistent with essential indexicals. Borrowing from Patrick Grim, Martin argues that indexical expressions such as those which contain the word 'I' cannot be replaced by non-indexical expressions. Using the indexical expression 'I spilled my soup' as an example, Martin writes:

But according to Grim, this identity [that of 'I spilled my soup' with 'Martin spilled his soup'] cannot be maintained. When I realize that I spilled my soup, my knowledge is not the impersonal kind expressed by ['Martin spilled his soup']. I am ashamed and feel guilty about *my* spilling my soup. . . . My friends and relatives may be embarrassed about Martin's spilling his soup. But only *I* can feel ashamed and guilty, since the clumsiness was *mine*.⁵⁷

As indexical knowledge is propositional, God cannot have all propositional knowledge. Consequently, God cannot have the kind of knowledge Martin has when he thinks 'I spilled my soup'. And this conflicts with the definition given above that God has all propositional knowledge. Martin brings up two different solutions to this problem, only to dismiss them.

Richard Gale has also raised the problem of indexical knowledge as it relates to theism.⁵⁸ The thrust of his argument however, is against the notion of God existing as a timeless being and still having knowledge of tensed propositions. Gale and some theists agree that if God exists he must exist within time, and if God is timeless he cannot know indexical propositions.⁵⁹ *I disagree with this*, but due to the length of time it would take to intelligibly discuss this issue, God's timelessness and tensed indexical propositions will not be addressed here.⁶⁰ However, some of what will be said in response to Martin is germane to that issue.

Jonathan Kvanvig and Hugh McCann⁶¹ deal with the various problems of indexicals by providing an account of the matter which involves a triadic account of belief. They write:

On a triadic account, when Hume believes of himself what is expressed by the sentence 'I'm Hume', he believes exactly the proposition believed by Heimsohn when Heimsohn believes what is expressed by 'He's Hume'. Their beliefs are not the same, however, for two reasons. First, and most obviously, one of them is held by Hume and the other by Heimsohn. Second, and more important, the *belief state* that Hume is in is not the same belief state that Heimsohn is in, for the two states play different causal roles: Hume's belief state would lead Hume to respond, 'Here I am' to the question, 'Where's Hume?' and Heimsohn's would not. Thus the triadic theory of belief eliminates the need for perspectively limited propositions in accounts of personal indexical, by positing a third *relatum* in believing, namely a belief state. The role of this third *relatum* is to allow first- and third-person speakers to have different means of access to one and the same proposition, thereby explaining the differences between *de se* belief and *de re* or *de dicto* belief.⁶²

Kvanvig writes the three parts of the triadic theory of beliefs are, "the particular intentional attitude, the object of belief, and *the way in which the propositional object is accessed*."⁶³ Thus, in the case of Martin spilling soup on himself, Martin and God would have the same object of the belief (the spilling of the soup on Martin) and the same intentional attitude (believing the soup was spilled on Martin). They would differ on the third member of the triad, the way in which the propositional attitude is accessed. Martin would have access to the belief through the experience of spilling the soup on himself, while God would have access through his own divine manner. While both would know the same propositions, their means of accessing them would be different. 'I spilled the soup on myself', when expressed by Martin is the same proposition as 'Martin spilled the soup on himself'. Consequently, God could know the same proposition as Martin, but because his point of access would be different, he would not know it in the same way and his reaction to it would be different. Thus, if Kvanvig and McCann's theory of the triadic nature of propositional belief is sound, and I think it is, then the problem of essential indexicals is dissolved.

Martin's next argument is that of negative unrestricted existential statements. Relying on the work of Roland Pucetti, he writes:

If P is omniscient, then P would have knowledge of all facts about the world. Let us call this totality of facts Y . If P is omniscient, then P knows Y . One of the facts included in Y is that P is omniscient. But in order to know that P is omniscient, P would have to know something besides Y . P would have to know: (10.6) There are no facts unknown to P .⁶⁴

The question arises of how (10.6) could be known. The answer provided by Pucetti is it couldn't because space and time are both infinite and even God could not search them to completeness. And if this is true, it seems God could never be certain he knows about all of the things which exist, thus he would not know (10.6). Further, Martin writes:

If God is omniscient, he must know all mathematical facts and know that there are no mathematical facts that he does not know. In order to know all mathematical facts, however, it would be necessary to investigate all mathematical entities and the relations between them and among them. But the number of mathematical entities and relations is infinite. So even God could not complete such an investigation.⁶⁵

My response to the Pucetti-Martin problem is it presupposes a different conception of God than the one I have defended here. They assume the Brute Fact theory is true (that which exists, exists for no reason) and believe if God existed he would just be another brute fact. According to Pucetti and Martin, even if God exists necessarily, there are still entities and events independent of him and outside his purview. But this assumes the falsity of the Necessary Deity theory wherein God exists necessarily and is the necessary foundation of all else that exists or could exist. In classical theism God is the ontological foundation of everything else and has as ideas the universals out of which, necessarily, everything concrete is patterned. Thus, necessarily, everything is related to God. In theism, can one consistently believe that necessarily God knows all things? I maintain the answer to this is yes. The God of classical theism is, as argued at length above, the greatest possible being and therefore sovereign. By definition there cannot be anything outside the knowledge or control of the GPB. Thus, if the previously defended concept of God is coherent, then the Pucetti-Martin argument is irrelevant.

The mathematical question posed by Martin leads one to believe God, in order to know all mathematical truths, must start somewhere and then investigate all questions. Even God would be unable to do this as it is impossible to go through an infinite series. Classical theists believe God eternally and necessarily knows all mathematical truths and relations; indeed, they necessarily subsist in his mind, therefore this objection fails.

The third objection Martin raises against the coherence of God's omniscience is based on an argument by Patrick Grim which states there is no set of all truths. And if there is no set, then God cannot know it. Martin's argument is as follows:

Suppose there is a set of all truths T . Then
 $T = \{T_1, T_2, T_3 \dots\}$

where T_1, T_2, T_3 , and so on are all the truths that there are. There is a power set PT of T , the set of all subsets of T Corresponding to each element of PT will be a truth. For example, T_1 will or will not be a member of each of the elements of PT . Thus all the following are truths: . . .

T_1 is a member of $\{T_1\}$.

T_1 is not a member of $\{T_2\}$.

T_1 is a member of $\{T_1, T_3\}$.

There will be at least as many truths as there are elements of PT , since a distinct truth corresponds to each element of PT . However, as Cantor has shown the power set of all sets will be larger than the original set. Thus there will be more truths than there are members of T . But since T is supposed to be the set of all truths, there cannot be a set of all truths. Consequently, an omniscient being that knows the set of all truths is impossible. Since an omniscient being must know the set of all truths, God as an omniscient being cannot exist.⁶⁶

The above argument has more to do with the concept of a set of all truths than with the concept of God, and ultimately results a logical contradiction. If T is supposedly the set of all truths, then it is the greatest possible set of truths. But the introduction of power sets results in a set larger than T . How this contradiction can be mathematically resolved I leave to the mathematicians. The best response to questions regarding God's omniscience is that God knows all truths, whether in the set of all truths, or (with apparent contradiction) in the power set. The theist need only insist there are no truths God does not know.

Next Martin moves to the question of whether omniscience combined with the concept of divine freedom gives rise to incoherence. Martin's argument is grounded in Richard Swinburne's theory that God cannot know the future because people have libertarian or incompatibilist freedom. Swinburne espouses a more limited sense of omniscience as he thinks people can do things which cannot be predicted by someone with a perfect knowledge of their natures, thus even God cannot know the future perfectly. He can however, know those things which are physically necessitated and not subject to alteration by an act of incompatibilist free will. Martin extends this by writing if God had incompatibilist free will, he couldn't know what he would do in the future. For Martin God could not know anything about the future, and could not have omniscience even in Swinburne's limited sense. Of course, he admits omniscience could be redefined again so that knowledge of the future is not entailed by the concept of omniscience, but this is contrary to most people's definition of omniscience.

The subject of incompatibilist free will is one of the most difficult in philosophical theology. While Swinburne and others believe God cannot know the part of the future which is affected by incompatibilist free will, others disagree. The theist has three options to choose from in denying Martin's attack: (1) defend a way for God to know the future even though both creatures and he himself have

incompatibilist free will, (2) redefine omniscience so it does not include God knowing the future, or (3) adopt a compatibilist account of free will.⁶⁷ Any of these would resolve the problem, though they may have other difficulties of their own.⁶⁸

Another problem raised by Martin is if God has only a limited knowledge of the future, he cannot know the morality of his past actions. Martin writes:

In order to know, for example, whether His past decision not to intervene and perform some miracle at some past time *t*1 was a correct moral decision, He would have to know what would have happened after *t*1 if He had intervened. In particular, He would have to know what would have been the long-range consequences if He had intervened.⁶⁹

The underlying presupposition of this argument is that the morality of any decision or action is partly determined by the outcome. That is, even if one is acting with the best of intentions, if the action turns out badly, one has performed an immoral act. In this theory, even if God is acting purely out of a desire to do good, based on the information he has, which is limited by his inability to know the future choices of contra-causally free individuals, he may have acted immorally if one of his decisions turns out wrong.

One response to this could be to adopt a compatibilist version of free will. Martin argues against this:

Even if this [compatibilism] were an adequate account of human freedom, it does not seem at all plausible as an account of divine freedom. If human action is determined and predictable, this is because it is part of the nexus of natural law. But God is supposed to have created that nexus and to transcend it, He is certainly not supposed to be *part* of the nexus He created.⁷⁰

But in a theistic version of compatibilism, human beings do not act as they do because of natural law only. They act accordingly on the things which compose their nature, e.g., beliefs, values, desires, etc. Similarly, God's free will is not to be thought of as the ability to act in a random manner. While he is not limited by any nexus of natural laws, or even anything external to himself, he is limited by his own nature. God never acts in a capricious or irrational manner. He only acts according to his own wisdom, beliefs (or knowledge), values and desires. Thus, a compatibilist version of free will is adequate for God. The one exception I would possibly allow is the choice of which world to instantiate, and even here God would act within limits. One could also challenge the ethical theory used in this argument. In some versions of a divine command ethic, wherein God's commands are the basis of right and wrong, God can never sin. For he is the very standard of right and wrong, and whatever he does is right by definition.

The concept of God which has been defended in this book allows no room for entities which are autonomous from God. If even the basic laws of logic are in some sense dependent upon God, then so are the laws of morality. Therefore, God can never do anything wrong, and any ethical theory which maintains he can, is

incorrect. Martin may state there is an inconsistency in saying it is epistemically possible for God to have compatibilist free will in everything save (possibly) the choice of which world to create. While I do not find any logical inconsistency, I must admit there is some tension. The tension lies in the fact one gives God compatibilist free will in all respects except one. Yet, perhaps this position isn't as strange as it looks. For although there may be indeterminacy as to which world to create, if God chooses one, then he would choose it as a whole, with every part in it being part of his plan.

Martin's final argument surrounds the property of omnipotence. He takes four different definitions of omnipotence, those of Richard Swinburne, George Mavrodes, Charles Taliaferro and Jerome Gellman, and subjects them to destructive criticism. Much of Martin's criticism is based on his belief that the property of omnipotence, as given, conflicts with other properties God is supposed to have, e.g., omniscience, goodness, disembodiedness, etc. Martin eventually puts forth his own definition of omnipotence:

(10.7) *P* is omnipotent IFF (1) *P* can bring about any state of affairs that it is logically possible for *P* to bring about, where (2) there is no state of affairs, *S*, such that (a) it is logically possible for *P* to bring about *S*, and (b) the bringing about of *S* by any agent *y* entails that *y* is less than all-good, omnipotent, omniscient, disembodied, and so on, and (3) there is no state of affairs, *S*, such that (a) it is possible for *P* to bring about *S*, and (b) its being logically impossible for *P* to bring about *S* entails that *P* is less than all-good, omnipotent, omniscient, disembodied, and so on.⁷¹

In Martin's words, "(10.7) is not what is normally meant by omnipotence."⁷² Martin seems to think we have a pre-reflective notion of omnipotence which conflicts with more exact definitions such as (10.7). While this may be true, it may also reflect the fact that our pre-reflective definitions are sometimes mistaken, and upon careful analysis must be altered in some manner. (10.7) is simply a definition which states (1) God can do anything logically possible, while at the same time (2) he cannot do things which would entail he be other than God, and (3) there are things only God as an omnipotent being can do. None of this seems exceptionable to me. Perhaps Martin's real worry is the same put forth by Richard Gale, which was dealt with in chapter three.⁷³ A brief response to this is that no essentially embodied being can be omnipotent, and further, to be truly omnipotent, one must be sovereign. And as there can be only one sovereign being, this being must be the GPB. Therefore, Martin's definition of omnipotence is *prima facie* acceptable.

Thus, Martin has failed to demonstrate any incoherence in the concept of God as the GPB, for in every argument there is at least one coherent alternative to his criticism.

There is one final point. In the section on the ontological argument, I stated the one way to disprove God's existence is to show the concept of God is internally inconsistent. In this chapter I attempted to show no such inconsistencies have been proven. But I have shown via the transcendental argument that the concept of God

is a necessary presupposition of all thought and knowledge. Therefore, if one attempts to prove an inconsistency in the concept of God exists, one is attacking the very basis of all proof. Hence, any apparent inconsistencies in the concept of God are just that, apparent. So while there are some interesting things to be learned from alleged inconsistencies in the concept of God, they can be viewed with the *a priori* knowledge that they are resolvable.

Other objections to classical theism exist. For example, an argument has been made that even given the existence of the God of classical theism, we have no reason to think he would create the world as it is. After all, we really don't know why God created the laws which exist, thus we are in the same position as that of the Brute Fact theorist who doesn't know why there are laws.

These two positions are quite different. In theism there exists a being who by definition can create any situation, and would in fact have reasons to create a universe where personal beings can live. If God exists and wishes to create a world where personal beings can exist, then he would create such a world. The laws which governed the universe within that world would allow for the existence of personal beings. Thus, even though one would not know why the particular laws which govern the universe exist, one would know the laws that do exist allow for the existence of personal beings and that God wished to create such a universe.

The non-theistic brute fact position maintains the set of worlds which could be instantiated includes all possible worlds, not just those possible worlds where personal beings could exist. In the brute fact view, there is no reason why there are laws which govern the universe. Therefore, the existence of such laws is an utter mystery, forever inexplicable by the very nature of Brute Fact theory.

This brings us to the discussion of the relation of logic to God in the Necessary Deity theory. As might be expected, the relation of God to logic depends upon the concept of necessity in both God and logic.

If God is a necessary being, who necessarily knows all things and can do all things, with what he cannot do being determined by his nature, rather than by some outside factor, then he is necessarily the source of all concrete necessity and possibility. As it is true that $2 + 2 = 4$ in all possible worlds, this equation is a necessary truth. Even God cannot change this. But if God exists, and exists necessarily, and if abstract objects subsist in God, then God is the foundation of all abstract or logical necessity and possibility. Abstract objects would necessarily exist in the mind of God. As there is nothing external to God which limits his ability to do something, all limitations are imposed internally by his nature. The laws of contradiction, as they are known and subsist in the mind of God in all possible worlds, are not extrinsic to God in this viewpoint. Gordon Clark writes, "The law of contradiction is not to be taken as an axiom prior to or independent of God. The law is God thinking."⁷⁴

Although I have limited the term 'Absolute' to pantheism in an attempt to keep the discussion clear, when properly understood it also applies to the theistic God. God is the Absolute. And based on this, the premise that there might be more than one primary necessary being is once again refuted for there cannot be more than one

Absolute. If there were, they would have to be related in some manner. In this case there would have to be some other Absolute acting as the background for both of them, the nexus of necessity and possibility which explains their natures and relationships. By definition, an Absolute is a thing which contains all relations within itself; it cannot be part of some other relation. Everything which exists or could possibly exist has God as a background. God has no background; there is nothing in any possible world that is more fundamental or basic than him. God is both sovereign and personal. In every possible world, God is the foundation for everything which exists. And since God is personal, nothing exists or happens unless God wills it to happen (in the Calvinist viewpoint), or God permits it to happen (in the Arminian viewpoint). It has already been shown that the PSR cannot serve as an incorrigible premise for the theistic arguments. However, because of God's sovereignty the PSR re-emerges as a conclusion. God's will is thus sufficient reason for everything that exists or could exist.

A few decades ago there was a great deal of discussion about the meaningfulness of the concept of God. Although this debate has died down, there are still some who question the meaningfulness of God. Kai Nielsen has spent most of his career denying 'God' is a legitimate concept⁷⁵ and Michael Martin, in his major work on Atheism, strongly questions it.⁷⁶ The basic argument has to do with the verifiability theory of meaning which maintains meaningless sentences cannot be verified. Martin writes:

Consider clear cases of sentences that do not express statements—for example, 'Colors speak faster than the speed of light', 'Physics is more mobile than chemistry', 'Close the door', 'I promise to pay you ten dollars'. We have no idea of what evidence in principle would count for or against these sentences. Nielsen challenges critics of the verifiability of meaning to come up with one example of 'an utterance that would be quite unequivocally be generally accepted as a statement of fact that is not so confirmable or infirmable'. Thus, the verifiability theory matches our intuitions in clear cases of what is factually meaningful and what is not.⁷⁷

The relevance for religious language in general and language about God in particular is that Nielsen and Martin think such language fails to be meaningful because of its unverifiability and uninfirmability. Nielsen and Martin allege that even religious believers have problems understanding religious terms. Statements such as "an infinite nonspatial entity, a disembodied spirit that acts in the world, and the like"⁷⁸ are examples of hard to understand religious terms. In addition, it's hard to imagine any empirical evidence which would count for or against such concepts. Martin, summarizing Nielsen's theory, writes, "Nielsen maintains that in order to be factually meaningful, religious propositions 'must be confirmable or infirmable in principle by nonreligious, straightforward, empirical statements'."⁷⁹ In other words, a religious proposition must have some empirical evidence that can either count for or against it.

A response to those who support the verifiability opposition to the meaningfulness

of theism, is the nature and function of God are being misconstrued. God is a necessary presupposition of all thought. God is in an analogous position to the basic laws of logic. The law of contradiction cannot be verified or infirmed. On the contrary, it is a necessary part of any verification or infirmation. Similarly, God's existence and nature must be presupposed for any verification or infirmation to be possible. God is epistemically prior to any empirical evidence.

The reasons for this have been the subject of this entire work. Brute Fact and Necessary Universe are unable to account for the universe as it is, or any specific ordered universe, or for knowledge. Therefore, Necessary Deity must be true. God is thus the *sine qua non* of all thought and proof. Those who do not believe in God, nonetheless presuppose his existence whenever they think. Similarly, irrationalists depend upon the laws of contradiction and identity whenever they make their case. Therefore, the existence of God is transcendental in more respects than one. The traditional meaning is that God is transcendental in the sense that he is 'outside' the universe. But God is also transcendental in the Kantian sense of the word, his existence is a necessary presupposition for the possibility of knowledge. As P.F. Strawson writes, "[I]t [the transcendental method] is concerned with the conceptual structure which is presupposed in all empirical inquiries."⁸⁰

Thus, the transcendental argument is the most fundamental of the theistic arguments because it shows the existence of God is a necessary presupposition of any thought, it undercuts any world-view or probability structure which denies the existence of God. Obviously this does not mean that in order to think intelligibly one must formally accept God's existence. It simply means that whenever non-theists assert something, they are borrowing presuppositions from theism.

Of course, one can always refuse to accept the argument. But in the absence of any logical objections, the argument and the existence of God cannot be rejected because the existence of God is a priori less plausible than the existence of leprechauns. For to rationally believe that particular probability structure one must be in a position to rationally evaluate the universe and the various things in it. Yet to do that one must either presuppose God's existence, (making one's position self-contradictory) or show that the universe can be made intelligible on the basis of brute fact or abstract necessity. And both of these are impossible. Thus any world-view or probability structure which does not presuppose God is subverted.

However the problem does not end here, for the mere existence of God does not explain which particular world-view or probability structure is the correct one. To answer this one would have to have a God's eye-view of the world. As human beings do not have a God's eye-view of the world and can never escape their finitude or existence within history, the probability of grasping the true world-view or the correct probability structure is minimal. All of the problems raised in chapter six come to the fore here. After all, there are an infinite number of world-views and probability structures to pick from. And consequently, when attempting to find the correct probability structure, one must use some probability structure, thus skewing any investigation in the direction of the views one already has.

This where God's sovereignty is relevant. For God, by definition not only knows

everything, but because of his sovereignty, is in control of everything. Further, because he is the sovereign, omniscient creator, who does not have to rely on anything outside of himself, he knows the coherence of the world. He knows all the relations and facts, and the meaning of each of them. God, in brief, has a God's eye-view of the world. Therefore, in order for us to know which is the correct world-view and probability structure, we need a revelation from God. God must tell us the meaning, at least in general, of the world. In short, for us to have knowledge, we need not only presuppose the existence of God, but presuppose he has revealed himself to us.

In conclusion, although there are an infinite number of world-views possible, there are only three basic ones: Brute Fact, Necessary Universe and Necessary Deity. Translated, this means either the universe is accounted for by chance, by abstract necessity, or by a necessary God. As everyone must necessarily possess a world-view and the probability structure which goes with it, everyone must make a judgement on the nature of the universe and God. The choice is unavoidable.

Endnotes

Introduction

1. Willis B. Glover, *Biblical Origins of Modern Secular Culture* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 10-11. It has been argued that classical theism was the cause of the rise of modern science. On this, see Stanley L. Jaki, *The Savior of Science* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988), *The Origin of Science and The Science of its Origin* (South Bend, IN: Regnery/Gateway, Inc., 1978), *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), and *The Savior of Science* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1988). See also R. Hooykas, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), Eugene M. Klaaren, *Religious Origins of Modern Science* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977) and Nancy Pearcey and Charles B. Thaxton, *The Soul of Science* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994).

2. Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957, reprinted 1980), 183.

3. Bruce R. Reichenbach, *The Cosmological Argument* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1972), 3.

4. Hume and Kant were working with a philosophic tradition that had been moving in an anti-theistic direction for some time. See Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

Chapter One

1. Some maintain that there are propositions that are neither true nor false.

2. See J.P. Moreland, *Universals, Qualities, and Quality Instances* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985).

3. There has been debate on the meaningfulness of the term 'universe'. See Kai Nielsen "Defending Atheism Again: Remarks on God and Coherence", in Peter Kreeft, ed., *Does God Exist?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 276. For a classical denial, see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965), 449. For a defense of the meaningfulness of the term, see Stanley L. Jaki, *God and the Cosmologists* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1989), 9-10; *Chance or Reality and Other Essays*. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 188-189; *The Purpose of It All* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1990), 129; and *God and the Cosmologists*, 21-22.

4. For example, if one were to describe the movement of a baseball, one would ordinarily describe its movements by the force it received from the bat. This is on the surface. For a complete explanation, one would have to appeal to the laws of inertia, gravity, the strong and weak nuclear forces, etc. These are the more basic laws and principles.

5. Ronald H. Nash, *Faith and Reason* (Grand Rapids, Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 24.

6. Peter Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Barnes and Nobel Books; a division of Harper and Row, 1981), 291-292.

7. *Ibid.*, 185.

8. For a philosophic look at the Mormon God concept, see Francis J. Beckwith and Stephen E. Parrish, *The Mormon Concept of God* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991).

9. Peter Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*. Although Eastern thought has usually been some form of pantheism, there have been movements towards the other positions. See Stuart Hackett, *Oriental Philosophy* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 128.

10. Geisler and Watkins, *Worlds Apart*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1989), 98.

11. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 111.

12. Francis J. Beckwith, *Bahai* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1985).

13. I am not taking the unitarian side in the debate between unitarians and trinitarians (just the opposite). It is just simpler to write this way. See, Millard J. Erickson, *God in Three Persons* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1995).

14. Lewis Edwin Hahn, ed., *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1991).

15. As with panentheism, this statement about levels must be qualified. For if there is the absolute or ultimate in and of itself on the one hand, and the world of our experience on the other, with the latter an emanation of the former, then there are two levels. But still in another sense there is only one level, for everything that exists is 'made up of' the one kind of substance, i.e., there is only one kind of thing which exists in different modes.

16. Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).

17. Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, reprinted 1978), 1-2.

18. *Ibid.*, 2.

19. *Ibid.*

20. James F. Sennett, *Modality, Probability, and Rationality* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 8.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, 7.

23. For two discussions and defenses of reality being determinate see Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1988), 89-92, and David H. Lund, *Perception, Mind and Personal Identity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 211-219.

24. Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, 54.

25. Philip L. Quinn, "Metaphysical Necessity and Modal Logic", *Monist* 65 (1982), p. 451.

26. Michael J. Loux, ed., *The Possible and the Actual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 27-28.

27. G.E. Hughes and M.J. Cresswell, *An Introduction to Modal Logic* (London: Meuthen

and Co., LTD., 1968), 77-79.

28. Robert Feys, *Modal Logic* (Louvain, Belgium: Published with the support of the Foundation Universitaire de Belgique, 1965), 76, 86, 93-95, 116.

29. J.L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 57.

30. A factually necessary secondary being would be a being which was caused and did not exist in all possible worlds, but in those worlds where it did exist, would be without a beginning and indestructible.

31. Quentin Smith, "A Big Bang Argument for God's Non-Existence", *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (April, 1992), 233.

32. Alan Sidelle, *Necessity, Essence, and Individuation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 24.

33. An example of Hilary Putnam. See Hilary Putnam, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: University Press, 1975), p. 233. Cited in Smith, "A Big Bang Argument for God's Non-Existence", 230. Not everyone agrees that it is a necessary truth that water is H₂O. For example, D.M. Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 137.

34. For a discussion of this and other related issues, see Arthur Pap, *Semantics and Necessary Truth* (New Haven: Yale University press, 1958).

35. Alan Sidelle, in *Necessity, Essence, and Individuation* is a defense of conventionalism.

36. Brand Blanshard, *Reason and Analysis* (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962), 287.

37. Pap, *Semantics and Necessary Truth*, 61.

38. Ibid.

39. Saul A. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 153.

40. Alan Sidelle, *Necessity, Essence, and Individuation*.

41. Blanshard, *Reason and Analysis*, 291.

42. Ibid., 289.

43. I wish to thank R. Brad Angell for his help in the sections on formal logic, where his expertise is vastly greater than mine.

Chapter Two

1. There is some concern that this is a faulty use of the term 'necessary'. But it is used this way in the literature.

2. Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 108.

3. Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 183.

4. It should be noted that those who think 'everything' must have a cause make an exception in God's case.

5. For example, William Lane Craig raises this question in "God and the Initial Cosmological Singularity: A Reply to Quentin Smith", *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (April 1992) 244-247.

6. Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil*, (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974), 107.

7. Norman L. Geisler and William Watkins, *Perspectives*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 63-64.

8. It should be noted that I owe the formulation of C-, E-, and N- properties to R. Brad

Angell of Wayne State University.

9. I owe the example of the meanest man in North Dakota to Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 80.

10. See the explanation of De Dicto and De Re necessity in Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 9-13.

11. Thomas V. Morris, ed., *The Concept of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

12. Even were it somehow impossible for the LNG, and therefore the GPB, to exist, the FNG according to the weak version still could not be greater than any other possible being. For there would be no being greater than any other. This is because there need not be any one person who would be the FNG, there would be an infinite number of individuals, who, in some worlds had the property of being the FNG.

13. This stance rejects the kind of view proposed by Leibniz and David Lewis that all individuals exist in only one world. In other worlds what would exist are 'counterparts' of the individuals who exist in other worlds. Most philosophers reject this theory. But even if it holds, one could still say there is no individual whose counterparts in other worlds would all know the capital of Peru. See *The Possible and the Actual*, Michael J. Loux, ed., (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), especially "Possible Worlds", by David Lewis.

14. This point has relevance for the Mormon concept of God, for they believe that their God began with a finite amount of knowledge and increased it until it became infinite.

15. One might call it water prime, since it has many of the same properties of water.

16. See chapter one.

17. This strong version usually depends upon either the principle of sufficient reason or the principle of existential causation. The principle of sufficient reason holds that everything must have a reason for being the way it is rather than some other way. The principle of existential causality holds that every finite being must have a cause of its existence.

18. Geisler and Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 187-189.

19. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 219.

20. *Ibid.*, 3.

21. Norman Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 133. Whether Thomas himself was a supporter of the FNG or the LNG is not entirely clear. See Anthony Kenny *The Five Ways* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1980, 1969), 47-48 and Alvin Plantinga *Does God have a Nature?* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1980), 52.

22. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 230.

23. Geisler, Thomas Aquinas, 39.

24. *Ibid.*, 96.

25. *Ibid.*, 40.

26. Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration Concerning the Being and Attributes of God* (London: Books printed for James Knapton at the Crown in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1705), 30-31.

27. William L. Rowe, *The Cosmological Argument* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 202.

28. I received this information in a telephone conversation with William Watkins.

29. Ronald Nash, *The Concept of God*, 112.

30. Mr. Trenton Dougherty wrote this to me in a letter.

31. By 'strongly immutable', what is meant is God does not change at all. 'Weakly immutable' means God does not change in any of his basic properties; i.e., he never ceases to be or becomes omniscient, omnipotent, or omnibenevolent, etc. See Thomas V. Morris, *Our Idea of God*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 119-138.

32. See Lawrence Lombard, *Events: A Metaphysical Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986). For Lombard, an event is essentially a change in something.

33. Among whom were Boethius, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Scotus, and indeed most theists prior to modern times. For an explanation of what Aquinas thought of divine simplicity, see Peter Burns, "The Status and Function of Divine Simpliceness" in *Summa Theologiae* Ia, qq. 2-13., *The Thomist* 57, 1-26.

34. Among those who have recently defended the notion of divine simplicity are William Mann, "Divine Simplicity", *Religious Studies* 18, 451-471; Eleanor Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Absolute Simplicity", *Faith and Philosophy* 2, 353-382; William F. Vallicella, "Divine Simplicity: A New Defense" *Faith and Philosophy* 9, 508-525; and Brian Leftow, "Is God and Abstract Object?" *Nous* 24 581-598.

35. Recent opponents include Alvin Plantinga, *Does God have a Nature?* and Thomas V. Morris, "On God and Mann: A View of Divine Simplicity", in *Anselmian Explorations* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 98-123.

36. Three, in fact.

37. Any other concept would seem to either lack plausibility or else be reducible to one of these four.

38. David E. Schrader, "The Antinomy of Divine Necessity", *Philosophy of Religion* 30, 45-59.

39. *Ibid.*, 57.

40. Ronald Nash, *The Concept of God*, 112.

41. John Hick, "God as Necessary Being", *The Journal of Philosophy* 57, 731.

42. Norman Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas*, 18.

43. David Schrader, "The Antinomy of Divine Necessity", 54-55.

Chapter Three

1. Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 109.

2. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* edited, with an introduction by Norman Kemp Smith (Indianapolis: The Bobs-Merrill Company, 1947 (1779)), 189. Quoted by Robert Merrihew Adams, "Has it been Proved that All Real Existence is Contingent?" 8 (July, 1971), 284.

3. J.N. Findlay, "Can God's Existence be Disproved?" in *The Ontological Argument*, edited by Alvin Plantinga (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Books, 1965) 118-119. Findlay now thinks that his argument against the existence of God fails. See *Ascent to the Absolute* (London: George Allen and Unwin, LTD, 1970).

4. Kai Nielsen, "Defending Atheism Again: Remarks on God and Coherence" in *Does God Exist?* ed. by Peter Kreeft (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), 261-262. Nielsen admits the concept of existing in every possible world may give us some idea of what a necessary being is like.

5. Richard Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 265.

6. Nash, *The Concept of God*, 110.

7. Keith Parsons, *God and the Burden of Proof*, (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1989), 40.

8. Nash, *The Concept of God*, 110.

9. J.J.C. Smart, "The Existence of God", in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* ed. by Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, (London: SCM Press LTD, 1955), 38-39.

10. Bruce R. Reichenbach, *The Cosmological Argument* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1972), 119.

11. John Morreal, "God as Self-Explanatory", *Philosophical Quarterly* 30 (July 1980),

208-209.

12. Michael Dummett, *Truth and Other Enigmas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 229.

13. G.E. Hughes, "Can God's Existence be Disproved?" in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, 59-60.

14. J.J.C. Smart, "The Existence of God", 38.

15. Morreall, "God as Self-Explanatory", 208.

16. Ibid.

17. Robert Adams, "Has it Been Proved that All Real Existence is Contingent". in *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (July 1971): 289. For an analysis of Kant, see Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Translation, Introduction, and Lexicon by Albert Hofstadter (Indianapolis, IN: University Press, 1988), 27-76.

18. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 504-505.

19. Antony Flew, *God: A Critical Enquiry*. (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1984), 74.

20. J.J.C. Smart, *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, 34.

21. Terence Penulhum, "Divine Necessity", in *The Cosmological Argument: A Spectrum of Opinion*, ed. by Donald R. Burrill (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967), 151.

22. C.J.F. Williams, *What is Existence?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

23. Ibid., 260.

24. Ibid., 79.

25. Ibid., 264.

26. Peter A. Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1981), 222.

27. C.J.F. Williams, *What is Existence?*, 61.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 25.

30. Ibid., 54.

31. Ibid., 69.

32. Ibid., 75.

33. Ibid., 76.

34. Ibid., 260.

35. Gordon H. Clark, *Three Types of Religious Philosophy* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1977), 39. Writes Clark, "The predicate existence can be attached to everything real or imaginary without exception. Dreams exist, mirages exist, the square root of minus one exists. These statements, however, are meaningless; they tell us nothing about dreams and the square root of minus one. What we want to know is how one thing differs from another. Why is a dream not the square root of minus one; why is a house not a cat." Ibid., 39. The kind of existence Clark is discussing here is what I have named P-existence.

36. See John W. Robbins, *Answer to Ayn Rand* (Washington, D.C.: Mount Vernon Publishing Company, 1974), 49.

37. See David Braine, *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 123-128.

38. C.J.F. Williams, *What is Existence?*, 242-276.

39. Braine makes various distinctions on existence, somewhat different than mine. See 123-128.

40. Barry Miller, *From Existence to God* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Pages 64-78

argue for existence being a real predicate.

41. Ibid., 68.

42. Ibid., 69

43. For Malcolm's position on this, see Norman Malcolm, "Malcolm's Statement of Anselm's Ontological Argument". In *The Ontological Argument*, ed. by Alvin Plantinga (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1965), 146-147. For a discussion of Hartshorne's view see H.G. Hubbeling, "Hartshorne and the Ontological Argument", in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne*, ed. by Lewis Edwin Hahn, (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1991), 362. For Van Inwagen see Peter Van Inwagen, *Metaphysics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993) 78.

44. Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 234-235.

45. See the last part of chapter one, and also G.E. Hughes and M.J. Cresswell, *An Introduction to Modal Logic* (New York: Routledge, 1968), 49.

46. Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic*, 237.

47. Ibid., 235-236.

48. Ibid., 236.

49. Kai Nielsen, "Necessity and God", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 10 (1979). For Nielsen's later reflections on the concept of a Logically Necessary God, see Kai Nielsen, "Defending Atheism Again", in *Does God Exist?*, 261-262.

50. Ibid., 12.

51. Nielsen throughout both this essay and in his work in general takes a verificationist line; for him statements have meaning only if there is some conceivable way in which they could be verified.

52. Two of Nielsen's examples where he believes there are contradictions in the idea of God are infinity and transcendence. "I was arguing that an alleged essential (defining) property of God, namely *being infinite*, was logically incompatible with another essential property, namely *being an individual*." "Defending Atheism Again: Remarks on God and Coherence", in *Does God Exist?*, 256. Nielsen sees a contradiction in the concept of God because he assumes a Spinozistic definition of infinity. But this is not the concept of infinity that classical theists have. Rather, for God to be infinite just means he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, etc.; all of which seem to be compatible with being an individual. Similarly, Nielsen's charge that God's being transcendent is incompatible with his being immanent seems to assume the wrong definition of transcendence. That God is transcendent means that he is not an object in the space-time universe. That he is immanent means he is causally operative in the universe. There is no contradiction.

53. Robert M. Adams, *The Virtue of Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 210.

54. Ibid., 209-210.

55. Nielsen, "Necessity and God", 10.

56. Ibid., 10-11.

57. Arthur Pap, *Semantics and Necessary Truth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 98.

58. Ibid., 259.

59. Nielsen, "Necessity and God", 11-12.

60. Ibid., 13.

61. David Schrader, "The Antimony of Divine Necessity", *Philosophy of Religion* 30 (1991), 45-59.

62. Nielsen, "Necessity and God", 13.

63. Ibid.

64. Keith Yandell, *Christianity and Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 86. See also "Divine Necessity and Divine Goodness", in Morris, Thomas V., *Divine and Human Action* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 313-334.

65. Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 182. Clouser is far from being alone in having a non-cognitivist conception of God in his essence. Similar, though significantly different, theories are held by Wittgenstein and D.Z. Philips. On this, see Richard Messer, *Does God's Existence Need Proof?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). A similar position is also taken, most unfortunately, by Eric Voegelin. See Michael P. Morrissey, *Consciousness and Transcendence* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

66. Ibid., 183.

67. Ibid., 184-185

68. Ibid., 312, n.24.

69. Ibid., 178-180.

70. Ibid., 180.

71. Ibid., 181.

72. Ibid., 181.

73. Ibid., 182.

74. Brian Leftow, "Is God an Abstract Object?" *Nous* 24 (1990) 594.

75. Eleanor Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Absolute Simplicity", *Faith and Philosophy* Vol. 2 No. 4 (October 1985), 356-357.

76. Ibid., 357.

77. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*, 181.

78. Ibid.

79. William F. Vallicella, "Divine Simplicity: A New Defense", *Faith and Philosophy* Vol. 9 No. 4 (October 1992), 508-525.

80. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*, 182.

81. Ibid., 176-180.

82. Ibid., 182.

83. Ibid., 183.

84. Ibid., 186.

85. Ibid., 190.

86. Ibid., 180-181.

87. See Alvin Plantinga, *Does God have a Nature?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980), especially 125-126.

88. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*, 78 and elsewhere.

89. Thomas Molnar, *Theists and Atheists* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1980), 137. See also Thomas Molnar, *God and the Knowledge of Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

90. Molnar, *Theists and Atheists*, 139-140.

91. Terry Miethe and Antony Flew, *Does God Exist?* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 40.

92. George Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God*. (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1979), 50.

Chapter Four

1. Alvin Plantinga, "Is Theism Really a Miracle?" *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (April 1986), 115-116. I have paraphrased things a bit.

2. J.L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 41-63.
3. Plantinga, "Is Theism Really a Miracle?"
4. Michael Tooley, "Plantinga's Defense of the Ontological Argument" *Mind*, Vol. XC (1981), 422-427.
5. Patrick Grim, "Plantinga's God and other Monstrosities" *Religious Studies* 15 (1979), 91-97.
6. Michael Martin, *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 85-95.
7. Tooley, "Plantinga's Defense of the Ontological Argument," 424.
8. Ibid., 424.
9. Ibid., 425.
10. Ibid., 426.
11. Grim, "Plantinga's God and other Monstrosities", 96-97.
12. Martin, *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*, 94.
13. Ibid.
14. In my dissertation I used the example of our dog Max who is no longer with us, so our dog Katie will be used.
15. Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), 90-91.
16. Martin, *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*, 83.
17. I owe this example to Dr. Bruce Russell of Wayne State University.
18. Robert Adams, *The Virtue of Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 209-210.
19. By power I mean the ability to effect some thing, including the ability to create or destroy. The GPB has, by definition, the power to create or destroy anything that can be created or destroyed.
20. James Ross, *Philosophical Theology* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), 178.
21. Omnipotence takes more than just power, however; there must also be the knowledge how to use it.
22. For a discussion of this point, see Thomas Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 213-214.
23. Richard Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 215.
24. The basic thought behind this argument is ancient, going back as far as Irenaeus. See his "Against Heresies" in L. Russ Bush, *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 68-69.
25. A third option is that the universe is itself a necessary being. See chapter nine.
26. Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, 214.
27. Martin, *Atheism*, 82.
28. Synthetic necessity will not do either. There seems to be no contradiction generated by maintaining that the GCAD does not possess all perfections as there is if one maintained that something could be colored red and colored green at the same time and place.
29. For a defense of the concept of incarnation, see Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate*.
30. See Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, and Martin, *Atheism*.
31. Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, 22.
32. Ibid., 23.
33. See the section from Arthur Schopenhauer, in Alvin Plantinga, *The Ontological Argument* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1965), 66-67.

34. Tooley, "Plantinga's Defense of the Ontological Argument".
35. Robert Kane, "The Modal Ontological Argument" *Mind* (1984) Vol. XCIII, 336-350.
36. Brian Leftow, "Anselmian Polytheism" *Philosophy of Religion* (1988), 23:77-104.
37. Richard Gale, "Freedom versus Unsurpassable Greatness" *Philosophy of Religion* (1988) 23:65-75. See also *On the Nature and Existence of God*, 224-237.
38. Kane, "The Modal Ontological Argument", 348.
39. Tooley, "Plantinga's Defense of the Ontological Argument", 427.
40. This was suggested to me by Bruce Russell.
41. Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, 229.
42. This was suggested to me by Trent Dougherty.
43. Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, 235 ff.
44. Peter Van Inwagen, "Ontological Arguments".
45. *Ibid.*, 385.
46. *Ibid.*, 387.
47. Suffice it to say for now that Primary necessary beings are uncaused necessary beings while Secondary necessary beings are caused necessary beings.
48. J. William Forgie, "The Modal Ontological Argument and the Necessary A Posteriori" *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* (June 1991), 129.
49. *Ibid.*, 131.
50. *Ibid.*, 137.
51. *Ibid.*, 136.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*, 136-137.
56. *Ibid.*, 141, n. 10.
57. *Ibid.*, 138.
58. *Ibid.*, 139.
59. James F. Sennett, *Modality, Probability and Rationality* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 19.
60. *Ibid.*, 24.
61. James Ross, *Philosophical Theology*, 174.
62. Hugo Meynell, *The Intelligible Universe* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1982), 95.
63. Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, 203. Gale is actually using what he thinks is a generic argument of which Ross' argument is a species.
64. *Ibid.*, 203-204.
65. *Ibid.*, 205.
66. *Ibid.*
67. Van Inwagen, "Ontological Arguments", 385-386.
68. Martin, *Atheism: A philosophical Justification*, 95.

Chapter Five

1. Some have also argued from beauty.
2. See note 66, chapter nine.
3. Chaos would not produce order on an *orderly* basis.
4. On Aquinas' thought, see Jacques Maritain, *A Preface to Metaphysics* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1941), 141-144.
5. This is what will be called Necessary Deity theory.

6. See chapter eight.
7. Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, and David Basinger, *Reason and Religious Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 79.
8. Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 193.
9. Bruce R. Reichenbach, *The Cosmological Argument* (Springfield IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1972), 68.
10. Kelly James Clark, *Return to Reason* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 50.
11. Reichenbach, *The Cosmological Argument*, 68.
12. There is also what I call the Necessary Universe theory, which gives a necessary ground for the entities and events of the universe.
13. Brian Leftow, "A Modal Cosmological Argument", *Philosophy of Religion* 24 (1988), 162.
14. Ibid., 163.
15. Ibid., 168.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 169.
18. Ibid., 170-171.
19. Ibid., 174.
20. Ibid.
21. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J., *Insight* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), 673.
22. Ibid., 672-673.
23. Ibid., 674.
24. Ibid., 675.
25. Ibid., 676.
26. Barry Miller, *From Existence to God* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 83-84.
27. Ibid., 84.
28. William Lane Craig, "The Finitude of the Past and the Existence of God", in William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 57-63.
29. Ibid., 61.
30. Quentin Smith, "A Criticism of A Posteriori and A Priori Arguments for a Cause of the Big Bang Singularity", in Craig and Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology*, 179.
31. Craig, "The Finitude of the Past and the Existence of God", 60.
32. Ibid., 63.
33. Quentin Smith, in his part of *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology*. See also his *The Felt Meanings of the World* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1986).
34. Craig, "The Finitude of the Past and Big Bang Cosmology", 63.
35. Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 116-132.
36. Bruce Russell, "Evil and Design", unpublished paper, 24.
37. Ibid., 25-26.
38. Ibid., 26-27.
39. Robert Gange, *Origins and Destiny*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 41-47 and 157-161.
40. Gange, 46-47. See 162-164 for documentation.
41. John Leslie, *Universes* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 204. See note 66, chapter nine, on the Anthropic Principle.

Chapter Six

1. See Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). See especially chapters 8 and 9.
2. J.L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 26.
3. *Ibid.*, 17.
4. *Ibid.*, 25.
5. *Ibid.*, 27.
6. Michael Martin, *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 199.
7. Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 64.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. For the beliefs of many modern scientists on God and related matters, see Henry Margenau and Roy Abraham Varghese, eds., *Cosmos, Bios, Theos* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1992).
12. It might be argued that the Resurrection is not analytic to Christianity, for there are many Christians (E.g., Bultmann) who do not believe in it. My response to this is to say that according to the Bible and by the major creeds that have been almost universally accepted by Christian groups the Resurrection is considered essential. I would say that anyone who did not accept the historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus is not a Christian. However, if one denies this, one can replace Christianity with orthodox Christianity.
13. Cornelius Van Til, "Introduction", in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, Phillipsburg, New Jersey (The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), 25.
14. Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 65.
15. The Leprechaun problem was given to me by Dr. Bruce Russell.
16. Robert Shapiro, *Origins* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 130.
17. Charles Sanders Pierce, in Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss eds., *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Pierce, Volume I, Principles of Philosophy, and Volume II, Elements of Logic* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965), 375.
18. Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy: Volume VIII, Bentham to Russell*, (London: Burns and Oates Limited, 1966), 310.
19. James F. Harris, *Against Relativism* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1992), 60.
20. See Alfred J. Freddoso, "Medieval Aristotelianism and the Case against Secondary Causation in Nature", in Thomas V. Morris, ed., *Divine and Human Action* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 74-118.
21. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, Vol. I, translated by David Hugh Freeman and William S. Young, (Printed in the United States of America: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1969), 35.
22. Antony Flew, *Atheistic Humanism* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1993), 74-75.
23. Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 3.
24. It should be remembered that some probability structures can be deduced from logic alone, or from logic and the basic facts of a situation.
25. Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Nutley, NJ: The Craig Press, 1960), 3.
26. For a sustained argument to this point, see Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*.
27. Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Rise of Modern Paganism*,

Vol. I. (New York: Norton, 1977).

28. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*, 36.

29. David Bohm, "Further Remarks on Order", in *Towards a Theoretical Biology* as quoted in Philip E. Johnson, *Evolution as Dogma* (Dallas, TX: Haughton Publishing Co., 1990), ii.

30. It has often seemed to me that many modern academics take naturalism for granted; so much so they think that naturalism is 'neutral' and 'objective' rather than just one of several basic options. See Phillip E. Johnson, *Reason in the Balance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995).

31. William Alston, *The Reliability of Sense Perception* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 77. Alston denies that perception necessarily involves interpretation. Perception should be thought of as the signal or stimuli received from the environment, while interpretation should be thought of as the meaning that the mind gives to the stimuli. He writes, "No doubt normal, adult sense perception, and spiritual perception as well, is heavily conceptualized; in being perceptually aware of the environment, we are typically simultaneously aware of what various things are, what they look like and are like, and what their practical significance is for us. Normal perceptual experience is shot through with 'interpretation'. Nevertheless, what makes this a matter of perceiving the house, rather than just thinking about it or remembering it, is the fact of *presentation, givenness*, the fact that something is presented to consciousness, is something of which I am *directly aware*. And this is something that is distinguishable from any elements of conceptualization, judgment, belief or other forms of 'interpretation', however rarely the former may be found without the latter in adult experience." *Perceiving God* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 27. If Alston is correct here, then not all perception involves interpretation. For example, the perception of infants may not, at least at some times. David Lund argues that there basic sense perceptions are of themselves without interpretation, though of course they are all immediately given interpretation. See his *Perception, Mind and Personal Identity* (Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1994), Part I. Even if it is correct that all adult perception at the higher level would involve interpretation, and atheism and agnosticism are no less interpretations than theism, indeed, high level interpretations. Atheism interprets the world as being uncreated while agnosticism interprets the world as being such that one does not or cannot know, whether there is a creator or not.

32. B.C. Johnson, *The Atheist Debater's Handbook* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1981), 12.

33. Such as George Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1979), 7-18, and Gordon Stein, *An Anthology of Atheism and Rationalism* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1980), 3-6. All three of these authors (and others), define atheism as a lack of belief in God. See also Martin, *Atheism: The Case Against God*, 466-476.

34. Johnson, *The Atheist Debater's Handbook*, 13.

35. Such as world-views where the existence of giant man eating frogs was a part of the world-view itself. E.g., there might be a world-view where there was a belief in a god whose favorite hobby was creating large, man eating amphibians. According to this world-view, the existence of such creatures would be quite probable.

36. See J.P. Moreland, *Christianity and the Nature of Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 95-96.

37. See Antony Flew's essay, "The Presumption of Atheism" in *God, Freedom and Immortality*, (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1984), 13-30.

38. Keith M. Parsons, *God and the Burden of Proof* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1989), 123.

39. Alvin Plantinga, "Self-Profile", in *Alvin Plantinga* ed. by James E. Tomberlin and Peter Van Inwagen (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), 43.

40. Thomas Sowell, *A Conflict of Visions* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1987), 13.

41. If one has an intuition that God exists, then one will likely not accept as a premise either that the existence of God is antecedently improbable, or that the burden of proof properly lies on the theist. To do so would be to drop one's own noetic structures and adopt the structures of one's opponents. Many atheists seem to say this to theists. 'Let us examine the question of whether God exists. In doing so, you will have to abandon all your beliefs and intuitions on the subject, and assume that a priori, the existence of God is extremely improbable'. This is a bad deal.

42. Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 8.

43. Ibid.

44. Harris, *Against Relativism*, 1.

45. Ibid.

46. For example, Joseph Margolis rejects the thesis that Quine, Goodman and Rorty are really relativists. See his *The Truth About Relativism* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991).

47. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 228.

48. Ibid., 223.

49. Ibid., 8.

50. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979). In some ways Rorty is more radical than Bernstein, none-the-less he shares with him the ideal of 'keeping the conversation going'. But if there is no objective truth, why should one care to keep the conversation going? See Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 85.

51. Joseph Margolis, *The Truth About Relativism*.

52. Ibid., 8.

53. See Ibid., 40-53.

54. Ibid., 47.

55. Ibid., 12.

56. Ibid., 12-13.

57. Harris, *Against Relativism*, 193.

58. Philip E. Devine *Relativism, Nihilism, and God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

59. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Crossroad, 1975). See also Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, trans. by Francis McDonagh (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976); Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980); Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980); E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967) and Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991). This list only scratches the surface of the literature on the subject.

Chapter Seven

1. Michael Scriven, *Primary Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 123-124. Many other philosophers have also argued against applying considerations

of probability to the universe as a whole. For example, D.H. Mellor writes, "Now the trouble with supposing the world to be the result of a chance process is that, not merely *has* the process happened only once, it *could* only happen once. The world comprising all that there is, it does not make sense to suppose two worlds, which might be qualitatively the same or different as two chance processes of which they are the outcomes had the same or different outcomes. We may, of course, talk of other possible worlds, but this is only a way of referring to the fact that there is no logical necessity in the world being as it is, that science and common observation cannot spin their results out of logical reflection. But this does not, and cannot, mean that these other possible worlds are lying around in a limbo of potentialities, waiting to be realized if some Supreme Dealer should decide to pick up the pack and deal again." (D.H. Mellor, "God and Probability" *Religious Studies*, v (1969), 227. For a critique of Mellor, see B.L. Hubblewaite, "Mellor's 'Bridge-Hand' Argument" *Religious Studies*, 22, S-D 1986, 473-479.) In response I would say that what matters here is logic. On Brute Fact theory, which Mellor apparently accepts, that this possible world was instantiated rather than some other is by definition a matter of chance. Possible worlds may not be 'lying around in limbo', but regardless of the stance one takes on the existence of possible worlds, the world on Brute Fact theory could have been other than it is in an infinite number of ways. As was argued above, each possible world does not come as a unified whole, but rather is composed of lesser objects and events. On Brute Fact theory, each of these must exist by chance, being logically discrete, and therefore it is perfectly meaningful to ask how the ordered whole could be composed of chance events.

2. William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 200.

3. The same point is found in John Leslie, *Universes* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

4. See Gordon H. Clark, *Logic* 2nd. ed. (Jefferson, MD: The Trinity Foundation, 1988), 117-131.

Chapter Eight

1. 'A Debate on the Existence of God', reprinted in John Hick (ed.), *The Existence of God* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 175.

2. Mortimer Adler, *How to Think about God* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1980), 143-144.

3. See for example, Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* (London: Books Printed for James Knapton, at the Crown in St. Paul's Church Yard, 1705), 44-47, Ernst Nagel, *The Structure of Science*, 2nd ed., 53-54, quoted in William Lane Craig, *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus during the Deist Controversy* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1985), 488-489, and Paul Davies, as quoted in Gerald Priestland, *The Case against God* (London: William Collins Sons and Co. Ltd., 1984), 103, and Borden Parker Bowne, *Metaphysics* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1898), 242.

4. Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York: A Touchstone Publication Book Published by Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1983), 179, 187.

5. F.R. Tennant, *Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1937), 3.

6. D.M. Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 9.

7. George Molnar, Kneale's Argument Revisited, *Philosophical Review*, quoted in D.M. Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, 12.

8. Hugh Ross, *The Fingerprint of God* (Orange, CA: Promise Publishing Co., 1989), 120.

9. Bertrand Russell, *Bertrand Russell on God and Religion* ed., by Al Seckel (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1986), 48.

10. As unlikely as a tornado in a junkyard producing a Boeing 707. This illustration was made by the British astronomer and mathematician Chandra Wickramasinghe, quoted by Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution* (London: Triangle SPCK, 1985), 36.

11. Keith Parsons, *God and the Burden of Proof* (Buffalo: Prometheus Press, 1989), 91-92.

12. *Ibid.*, 92.

13. *Ibid.*, 92-93.

14. Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 10-11.

15. Keith Parsons, *God and the Burden of Proof*, 92. Some have argued that some of the laws of nature are necessary. For example, Gregory M. Browne argues that Newton's three laws of motion are logically necessary. *Four Dichotomies of Truth* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1994), 371-380. He does so on the basis of first arguing that inertia is essential to being a body. *Ibid.*, 349-355. However, it seems clear to me that this is not so. One cannot, for example, non-contradictorily think of a body that is not extended. Being extended is part of the meaning of what it is to be a body. But why cannot one non-contradictorily conceive of a body, that is, a thing that is extended, that has no inertia? Browne defines inertia as the inability to cause oneself to move (*Ibid.*, 349). But again, why cannot bodies move or change for no reason? Where is there a De Re Contradiction to be found in this conception?

16. D.M. Armstrong, *What is a Law of Nature?*, 85.

17. *Ibid.*, 86.

18. *Ibid.*, 88.

19. *Ibid.*, 97.

20. *Ibid.*, 82.

21. *Ibid.*, 158-169.

22. *Ibid.*, 159. Regarding the non-necessity of the laws of nature, H.P. Owen has this to say, "Unless there is an objective necessity in causal sequences they are incredibly fortuitous. Let us take the often-used example of the match and the flame. Whenever a match is struck (under the appropriate conditions) a flame is observed to follow. Yet the odds against the fact that it has always followed-and 'always' here means millions of times without exception-are enormous unless it is necessitated. . . . Equally, unless causes necessitate their effects we have no ground for prediction. A purely contingent set of sequences in the past gives us no reason for expecting a similar set in the future." *The Christian Knowledge of God* (London: Atholone Press, 1969), 82. See also Brand Blanshard, *Reason and Analysis* (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Co., 1962), 469. Ultimately, the laws of nature are either absolutely (which is to say, logically) necessary, or they are logically contingent. To say they are contingently necessary is either self-contradictory, or else it merely means that they are logically contingent but dependent upon something else for their uniformity, or else it is just saying that they are uniform, without any explanation given.

23. B.C. Johnson, *The Atheist Debater's Handbook* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1983), 31-32.

24. William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979), 82 ff. It should be pointed out that even if there were a 50% chance of obtaining a uniformly law ordered universe, there would be only a small chance that it would be life sustaining.

25. There is one possible exception to this, being Cantor's famous 'diagonal slash'. It is doubtful that this is of any real relevance to the question at hand. The relationship

between the natural numbers and the real numbers is just part of the general paradox of infinite numbers. With infinity, one can play all sorts of paradoxical games, which is the reason that Craig and others have denied that an extra-mental infinite could exist.

26. John D. Barrow and Frank Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 193, 248-249.

27. Nick Herbert, *Quantum Reality* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1987), 19-20. See also George Gale, "Cosmological Fecundity: Theories of Multiple Universes" in John Leslie, *Physical Cosmology and Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990).

28. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1936).

29. See M.A. Corey, *God and the New Cosmology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1993), 175-180.

30. Robert Shapiro, *Origins* (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), 130.

31. J.L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 147.

32. Michael Scriven, *Primary Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 129. For criticism, see John Leslie, *Universes* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 114-115.

33. J.L. MacKie, *The Miracle of Theism*, 99.

34. *Ibid.*, 92.

35. *Ibid.*, 84.

36. Antony Flew, *God: A Critical Analysis* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1984). First Printed in 1966 by Hutchinson and Co. Ltd. of London, England, 92.

37. Bertrand Russell, *Bertrand Russell on God and Religion* ed. by Al Seckel, 41.

38. *Ibid.*, 126.

39. David Braine, *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 186-187.

40. *Ibid.*, 178.

41. *Ibid.*, 180.

42. See Jonathan L. Kvanvig and Hugh J. McCann, "Divine Conservation and the Persistence of the World", in Thomas V. Morris, ed., *Divine and Human Action* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).

43. *Ibid.*, 48.

44. Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

45. Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Evidences*, vol. 6 of *In Defense of the Faith* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1975), 36-37.

46. *Ibid.*, 109-110.

47. *Ibid.*, 65.

48. *Ibid.*, 93.

49. Milton Fisk, *Nature and Necessity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 75-76.

50. William P. Alston, *The Reliability of Sense Perception* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

51. This example was given by Van Til to Richard Ostella.

52. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976), 102.

1. Ayn Rand, "The Metaphysical versus the Man-Made", in *Philosophy: Who Needs It*, Ed. and with an introduction by Leonard Peikoff (New York: New American Library, 1982), 25. See also Douglas B. Rasmussen, in "Logical Possibility: An Aristotelian Essentialist Critique", *The Thomist* 47 (October 1983): 513-540. For a history of the Objectivist movement see Nathaniel Branden, *Judgment Day: My Years with Ayn Rand* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989) and Barbara Branden, *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1986).

2. *Ibid.*, 24.

3. Alvin Plantinga, "A Christian Life Partly Lived", in *Philosophers Who Believe*, ed., by Kelly James Clark (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 78.

4. See Willard Van Orman Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", in *From a Logical Point of View*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953).

5. Leonard Peikoff, "The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy", in Ayn Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 147.

6. Leonard Peikoff, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand* (New York: Dutton, 1991), 24.

7. Leonard Peikoff, "The Philosophy of Objectivism", lecture series (1976), Lecture 2, as quoted by Binswanger, *The Ayn Rand Lexicon*, 42. As can be seen from the quotation, the Objectivist position is that theism is not only false but contemptible. This attitude, widely held, is summarized by Thomas Molnar, "God is not god, it says, because I, man, would then be nothing, my being would be a borrowed one, I would not be *causa mei*; my freedom would be curtailed; my choice would be narrowed between good and evil; the creativity I feel surge in me would be a mere copy of the of the Creator's act; the feeling of elation over my exceptional gifts or deeds would be embittered by the reminder to be humble; the times in which I live and which are happiest and most advanced, would be just one among the limited many in the economy of God; the maturity that I sense in me and in mankind would be subject to errors and exaggerations like any age preceding ours. Therefore, I deny God's existence and name myself his successor; or I transcend God and aim at a super-god; or I absorb God in my soul and proclaim my own divinity; or I identify God with some collective event or project; or I hold that God is the future and as such he becomes in proportion as I (or we) carry him into the dawn of a new existence. Yet, if we look closely at this list of possible atheisms (there may be some other forms omitted) we find that they present no great variety, that they are reducible, indeed, to one: putting man in the place of God." *Theists and Atheists: A Typology of Non-Belief* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1980), 179-180. See also Molnar, *God and the Knowledge of Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). For more on the militant anti-theism of various thinkers and movements, see Harold Lindsell, *The New Paganism* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1987), 192, Igor Shafarevich *The Socialist Phenomenon* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980), 235, Gary North, *Marx's Religion of Revolution* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989 (1968)), *Science, Politics and Gnosticism* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1968), 36-37, Gene Edward Veith *Modern Fascism* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1993). James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (New York: Basic Books, 1980). Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, edited by John H. Hallowell (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1975), 289-299, Michael Franz, *Eric Voegelin and the Politics of Spiritual Revolt* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), Richard Pipes *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 130-131, Kenneth Minogue, *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), and Stephen McKnight, *Sacralizing the Secular* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 3-4.

8. Peikoff, "The Philosophy of Objectivism", as quoted in Binswanger, *The Ayn Rand Lexicon*, 517.
9. Nathaniel Branden, *The Objectivist Newsletter*, May 1963, 17.
10. Peikoff, "The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy". 122-123.
11. Ibid., 123.
12. Ibid., 123-124.
13. Ibid. 124.
14. Kant might have believed that our mental equipment could have been different than it in fact is.
15. Peikoff, "The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy", 125-126.
16. Ibid., 127.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., 132.
19. Ibid., 133.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 135.
23. Ibid., 136.
24. Ibid., 136-137.
25. Ibid., 144-145.
26. See Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
27. Peikoff, "The Analytic-Synthetic Dichotomy", 147.
28. Ibid., 148.
29. Ibid., 155. See also George Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1979), 70.
30. See for example, David Lewis, "Counterpart Theory and Quantified Modal Logic", or "Possible Worlds", both in Michael J. Loux, ed., *The Possible and the Actual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979).
31. In the necessary natures view, all internal properties are *E-properties*. In what might be called a strong version of the necessary natures view, all properties, internal and external, are necessary.
32. This has some similarities to the problem on induction that was raised by Nelson Goodman in *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Bobs-Merrill, 1965).
33. Milton Fisk, *Nature and Necessity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 1.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 25.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 26.
39. Ibid., 34.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., 40.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., 41.
44. Ibid., 42.
45. Ibid., 25-26.
46. Ibid., 26.

47. Ibid., 25.
48. Fisk defends this notion by an appeal to the S5 modal system of logic on p. 41.
49. John Leslie, *Value and Existence* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979).
50. Ibid., 48.
51. Ibid., 50.
52. Ibid., 42.
53. Ibid., 51.
54. Ibid., 52.
55. Ibid., 56.
56. Ibid., 57.
57. Ibid., 61.
58. Ibid., 106-107.
59. Ibid., 79.
60. Ibid., 162.
61. Ibid., 182.
62. Ibid., 82.
63. J.L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).
64. John Leslie, "Mackie on NeoPlatonism's 'Replacement for God'" in *Religious Studies* 22, 325-342.
65. Other senses are relevant, of course. All green things are necessarily green-De Dicto. On a realist theory of universals, there is necessarily a connection between the universal and the concrete entity.
66. William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 301-337. The book is a debate between the two authors on cosmology and the existence of God. Regarding the concept of something arising from nothing and the concept of the World Ensemble from various positions see John Leslie, ed. *Physical Cosmology and Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990) and *Universes* (New York: Routledge, 1989), William Lane Craig, and Quentin Smith *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1993), Victor J. Stenger *Not by Design* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988), 173. John Barrow and Frank Tippler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Stephen Hawking *A Brief History of Time*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1988),
67. Ibid., 333.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 334.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., 335.
72. Ibid.,
73. Ibid., 334.
74. On this point, Stanley Jaki writes, "Let it be assumed for the sake of argument that a theory does indeed explain everything in the physical world. Further let it also be assumed in an incredibly generous mood that no discovery will be made in the succeeding centuries or millennia that would conflict with that theory. Still that theory would have to include specific numerical data, such as the values of the basic constants of nature. Sweeping and utterly simple as that theory may appear, it would therefore remain a specific theory. As such it would be just one out of a great many specific theories and therefore a pointer toward cosmic contingency. The specificity of that theory would not disappear even if those constants, that is, their numerical values, would be reducible to one another, say in terms of

a number theory generating only those numerical values. For even in that case one still would have to reckon with the quantitative specificity of that theory or function." *God and the Cosmologists* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1989), 109. Jaki argues that Godel's theorem, that mathematics is necessarily incomplete, destroys any possibility that the Necessary Universe theory could be true. According to Godel's theorem, "no non-trivial set of arithmetic propositions can contain the proof of its consistency." (104) Further, "a necessarily true theory that cannot contain the proof of its consistency should seem a contradiction in terms." (106) This being true, no equation or set of equations that describe the universe could have its own necessity within itself-its necessity must come from elsewhere. But if this is true, then the universe's necessity must come from elsewhere.

75. Quentin Smith, *The Felt Meanings of the World* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1986), 180-181.

76. *Ibid.*, 238.

77. *Ibid.*, 181-182.

78. Other possibilities are that I misunderstand Smith, or that there are two Quentin Smiths, etc.

79. Of course, it may be just a matter of time before some enterprising philosophers argue that because everything can be colored, that abstract colors are the reason why the universe exists, or that because everything can be numbered, numbers are the reason for the universe's existence.

80. David K. Clark and Norman Geisler, *Apologetics in the New Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 13.

81. C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1955), 222.

82. See for example, Borden Parker Bowne, *Studies in Theism* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1970 (1879); *Theory of Thought and Knowledge* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1970 (1897); and *Metaphysics* (New York: AMS Press, 1979 (1898).

83. C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 209-210.

84. *Ibid.*, 210.

85. H.B. Acton, "The Absolute", in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* vol. 1, ed. by Paul Edwards (New York: The Macmillan Company and The Free Press, 1967), 8.

86. F.H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* 2nd. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1897), 460.

87. H.B. Acton, "The Absolute", 8.

88. Brand Blanshard, *Reason and Analysis*, 465-466.

89. *Ibid.*, 468-469.

90. *Ibid.*, 472.

91. Brand Blanshard, *The Nature of Thought*, vol. 1 (New York: Humanities Press, 1939), 651.

92. *Ibid.*, 639.

93. *Ibid.*, 654.

94. Thomas Molnar, *Theists and Atheists*, 18.

95. Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980 (1957), 159.

96. Thomas Molnar, *Theists and Atheists*, 19.

97. Norman Geisler and David Clark, *Apologetics in the New Age*, 157.

98. This was a quote by Cornelius Van Til, told to me by Richard Ostella.

99. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of Christianity and My Credo* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1971), 29.

Chapter Ten

1. Stanley L. Jaki, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 38.
2. William Barrett, *Death of the Soul* (New York: Doubleday, and Anchor Press Book, 1986), 31.
3. Plotinus, *The Essential Plotinus*, trans. with an introduction by Elmer O'Brien, S.J. (New York: New American Library, 1964), 76-77.
4. It has been asserted by Stanley L. Jaki that emanationism-the doctrine that the universe is an emanation of the Absolute rather than a free creation of God, prevented the rise of modern science in several cultures. See *The Savior of Science* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988).
5. Michael J. Buckley traces the origin of this notion back to the Baron D'Holbach in *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1987), 251-321.
6. This was suggested to me by Dr. Robert Yanal of Wayne State University.
7. Lewis S. Ford, "Theological Values in Current Metaphysics", *Journal of Religion* 26 (July, 1946: 157). Quoted by William D. Watkins, *The Dipolar God of Charles Hartshorne* (an unpublished Master's Thesis presented to Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 1.
8. I am better acquainted with Hartshorne's work.
9. See James Franklin Harris, ed., *Logic, God and Metaphysics* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992). Whitehead's Magnum Opus is *Process and Reality* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929).
10. Nancy Frankenberry, "Hartshorne's Method in Metaphysics", ed. by Lewis Edwin Hahn in *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1991), 293.
11. Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948), ix.
12. William Watkins, *The Dipolar God of Charles Hartshorne*, 13.
13. Ibid., 14
14. Ibid., 52.
15. William L. Reese, "The Trouble with Panentheism-and the Divine Event", in Lewis Edwin Hahn, *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne*, 194.
16. Charles Hartshorne, "Some Causes of My Intellectual Growth", in Ibid., 31.
17. Charles Hartshorne, "A Reply to My Critics", in Ibid., 615.
18. Ibid., 699.
19. William Watkins, *The Dipolar God of Charles Hartshorne*, 49.
20. Ibid., 49-50.
21. As quoted in Ibid., 50.
22. Robert H. Kane, "Free Will, Determinism, and Creativity in Hartshorne's Thought", in Lewis Edwin Hahn, *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne*, 137.
23. For Hartshorne, that the future is indeterminate means that God cannot know it.
24. John B. Cobb, Jr., "Hartshorne's Importance for Theology" in Edwin Lewis Hahn, *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne*, 180.
25. Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, 134.
26. Ibid.
27. Hartshorne defends other theistic arguments as well as the ontological. In *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne*, 725, he writes, "It is partly my fault that the notion has arisen that the ontological argument is for me the reason for accepting theism. As readers of this volume . . . know, I have half a dozen reasons, of which the ontological is only one."
28. Charles Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1962), 67.
29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 101.
32. Thomas Morris, ed., *The Concept of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 6-7.
33. Royce Gordon Gruenler, *The Inexhaustible God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 75-76.
34. See Lawrence Sklar, *Space, Time and Spacetime* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976),.
35. Royce Gordon Gruenler, *The Inexhaustible God*, 78.
36. Charles Hartshorne, "A Reply to My Critics", in Lewis Edwin Hahn, ed., *The Philosophy of Charles Hartshorne*, 616.
37. Royce Gordon Gruenler, *The Inexhaustible God*, 79.
38. William Lane Craig, "Creation Ex Nihilo" in Ronald H. Nash, ed., *Process Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 171.
39. Charles Hartshorne, "Whitehead on Process: A Reply to Professor Eslick", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 518.
40. See Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 183.
41. William Watkins, *The Dipolar God of Charles Hartshorne*, 15.
42. The problem of evil will not be considered in this book. For several different defenses against the problem of evil, see for example John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* 2nd. ed. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), Gordon H. Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation* (Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1961).and Stephen T. Davis, ed., *Encountering Evil* (Atlanta: John Know Press, 1981).
43. Paul Davies, *The Mind of God* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 179-180.
44. G.W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, trans. by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1989), 21.
45. Benedict De Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding, The Ethics and Correspondence*, trans. with and introduction by R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 78.
46. Paul Davies, *The Mind of God*, 179-180.
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